

Game of Stranger Things by Ladeeknight

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Summary:

Update!

I've recently edited and updated this story and it's summary, nothing that changes the shape of the original, just tightening a few things up, and adding more smut.

So I had this crazy little idea that I couldn't shake: What if the Game of Thrones characters found themselves in a Stranger Things situation? This is that. Sheriff Sandor Clegane investigates the disappearance of Bran Stark. The boy was last seen at his D&D game with his friends Gendry Wheeler, Lommy St. Claire, and Hot Pie. A past association with Bran's mother, Sansa Stark, is going to stir up a past mostly dead. But as Game of Thrones has taught us "what is dead may never die" and also there is more to fear from the Other Side than grumpkins and snarks.

The initiating circumstances are inspired by Stranger Things. But since these are GoT characters above and below somethings are going to be very different.

The E rating is for the smut that will be happening in flash backs or with older teens i.e. Dany, Jon, and Daario. The kids will not be

doing anything over a teen rating. But who knows what the adults will get up to, so in a abundance of caution I chose E. Also some of the gore may earn an E.

1. Party Like its 1983

Author's Note:

Here's a handy little who's who of Wintertown.
Sheriff Jim Hopper = Sheriff Sandor Clegane
Joyce Byers = Sansa Stark
Jonathan = Jon Stark (Sansa's Brother who has a
Rickon(ish) age gap with Sansa, but is meant to be
Jon Snow)
Will = Bran
Mike Wheeler = Gendry Wheeler
Nancy = Dany
Karen = Mageary
Ted = Bronn
Dustin = Hot Pie
Lucas = Lommy
Eleven = ?
Papa (Brenner) = Petyr Baelish
more later

Nov 6 1983

Ambrose Frey was not the smartest man on his research team, or the most well-liked. That was probably why he was volun-told to go down and reset the rift alarm.

The damned thing is always malfunctioning, he tried to comfort himself as he headed down the long flickering hall. It wasn't particularly cold in here, but gooseflesh puckered his skin all along the front side of his body as if his hair were straining to get away from something.

The shrill beep of the key panel almost blotted out the rattling noise that drew his eye to a thing that did not belong in a lab. *Well not this sort of lab anyway. They skipped animal testing at Frey Biotics and went straight to kids*, he chuckled to himself as he knelt in front of the little blue-eyed bunny that was so cutely wiggling his nose toward Ambros. "Here bunny, bunny," he said, thinking of the delight in his little Amy's eyes when he brought this fuzzy little guy home. The bunny hopped over to him making that rattling noise again. "That's

strange, " Ambros said. As proof of stranger things, the bunny's face split at it's quivering nose into five more or less equal portions that were studded inside with icicle-like spikes. That was the last thing Ambros saw.

###

Deep blue eyes the color of a stormy sea peered over a DM's screen. They shifted to pin each party member in turn. Bran the Wise was nervous but excited. He could tell that something big was coming, but it was the Cleric's job to mitigate damage and protect the party. Bran the boy built his character well, as had his friends. They were ready for whatever Gendry threw at them, though it seemed Bran was alone in this assessment.

"We're doomed if is the Demogorgon, " bemoaned Hot Pie through his lisp.

Gendry mastered his own smile of triumph silently, but not before Bran saw it.

"Shhhhhhhhhh don't give him ideas, " Lommy scolded. The table bumped as the dark-skinned boy's ill-aimed kick hit a wooden leg instead of a fleshy one.

"An army of troglodytes charge into the chamber," their adventuresmith said too casually as he scattered some mini's on the hashed board expertly so that each base fit perfectly within it's square.

"Troglodytes," Hot Pie confirmed his voice now filled with Bardic confidence. A few more titters of relief escaped several throats as Lommy rubbed his hands together in anticipation of the battle to come.

Once silence had fallen, Gendry cocked his mop of dark, curly hair to one side. "Did you hear that?" He cocked his head to the other side and squinted one eye while the other corner of his mouth twisted up. "That booming sound was definitely not made by troglodytes. It is a..." he slammed the mini down on the table so that all the others jumped. Gendry had just gone through a rather dramatic growth spurt and was still learning his own strength "Demogorgon!" The table erupted in cries of despair. "Bran, what's your action?"

"I don't know," Bran dithered. Much advice came his way. "Fireball!"

“Sanctuary!” He knew what he wanted to do, but the odds were not with him. Caution had been drilled into him in recent years, it was hard for him to make a move in such circumstances.

“The Demogorgon tires of your petty human bickering,” Gendry intoned in his “scary” voice, deep and raspy. “He stalks forward, intent on your demise. What do you do?”

Bran locked eyes with Gendry. The faintest flicker of an encouraging grin skimmed Gendry's lips. Bran shook his dice for luck and cast them across the table, crowing, “Fire Ball!” The dice raced across the table, the colorful cubic six-siders stopped indicating a decent amount of damage, but the 20 shot right off the edge. Everyone leaped from their chairs, hoping for a successful casting.

It was into this hotbed of mayhem that Mrs. Margeary Wheeler appeared at the top of the stairs brown curls and stylish figure silhouetted in the kitchen light pouring down the unfinished basement stairs. “What in the Seven are you boys doing down here?” she demanded sweetly.

“Mom, we’re in the middle of a campaign,” Gendry informed her, with less politeness than was his habit when speaking to his mother.

“I think you mean the end,” Mrs. Wheeler corrected calmly with an edge to her cordial tone. Bran had long learned the vibe in each of his friends’ homes. Mrs. Wheeler was a queen here. She never raised her voice or failed to smile, but she could and did exact meaningful punishments on her children when they didn’t behave to her specifications, which were not precisely strict, but centered heavily around manners and social presentation. Gendry was not far from being able to look his mother in the eye, but his dad was a rough man named Bronn Wheeler, who did whatever Mrs. Wheeler told him to. Gendry made a shooshing gesture by patting the air behind him as he tromped up the stairs to plead their case to his mom while the search for Bran's die continued.

Thinking of Mr. Wheeler led Bran's thoughts to swirl around his own father as he crawled face first along carpet peering under the couch for the errant die. Joff (Bran couldn’t even bring himself to think of him as dad) didn’t like him much. The tall blond man was always trying to change Bran, specifically make him less nerdy. Joff would have preferred him to be out tossing the football with his friends rather than playing at Dungeons

and Dragons. Bran sometimes wondered if Joff would have stayed with his mother if he'd been more of the son that Joff wanted. Bran couldn't quite bring himself to wish that he could be different even if meant that Joff had never left. Further introspection was derailed by a 20-sider winking a 19 at him from just behind the blocky leg of Gendry's wagon wheel couch. "I found it," Bran announced sadly to bring down some of the chaos in the room.

"What was it?" Hot Pie demanded.

"Too much," Bran exhaled forlornly. "The spell didn't go off, but I didn't knock myself out."

"It doesn't count if Gendry's not here," Lommy assured him. Just then Gendry reappeared at the top of the stairs shaking his head sullenly as he clomped down to start clearing away the game. "Roll again next week," Lommy whispered folding Bran's fingers around his die.

The boys packed up in a funk and Gendry walked them out to where their bikes were parked. Hot Pie and Lommy took off immediately, but Bran hung back. "I rolled a 19. The Demogorgon got me," he said to Gendry before mounting his bike and riding into the darkness.

As Bran road along he became aware of a burning sensation low on his leg. He looked down as he passed beneath one of the last street lights on his ride to see a thin red trickle beneath a tear in his pants. His mom would not be happy. She worried so much about his clothes, thinking they were the main reason he was bullied so much at school. Bran knew that she felt guilty for not having the money to buy him nice things. He'd tried to tell her on several occasions that he was just weird and that kids would tease him no matter what, but she was still sad.

As Bran rode further from the lights of town, the houses got shabbier and further from the main road. His family had not always been poor. Bran dimly remembered Sevenmases far away in a big bright house with roaring fires by a sparkling Sea. There were so many presents that the shiny papered boxes eclipsed the weir wood branch though it was lighted and laden with expensive glass baubles from across the Narrow Sea. And there was always more food and sweets than any of them could eat brought and arranged by tiptoeing servants. That was with Joff's family.

If he was being honest with himself, Bran preferred the dingy, ramshackle house way out by the Wolfswood. He could be himself there, with just his mother and bruncle (brother/uncle) for company. Bran turned off the King's Road onto a narrow two-lane road that his party had nicknamed the Demon Road after an old road that was said to have connected Old Volantis to Mereen way back before the Doom. That old road was said to have been plagued by pirates and worse, and the boys liked to pretend the same of this stretch of winding gravel, riding their bikes as fast as the shadows birthed by the encroaching trees allowed. Tonight was a particularly dark night, but Bran had made this journey hundreds of times. The road was predominantly lined with pines, but here and there the pale trunk of a weir wood could be glimpsed further back in the Wolfs Wood. There was even one with a face carved in it near the turn-off for home. The red sap seeping from the slashes made the face on this and most others that bore faces gruesome. Bran always waved at the face even though his friends laughed at the old superstition. Sometimes it was good to have something you knew was gruesome standing in the dark between you and what didn't know was out there.

As Bran approached the familiar spot, all he heard were shoosing pines without the comforting rustling of the red leaves of his woody old friend. He was so intent on looking for the pale trunk with its weeping face that he almost ran into crimson tipped branches that sprayed darkly across the road. Bran skidded to a halt, an inexplicable sense of loss clutching at his chest.

Gripped by a burning need to know what had happened to the tree, he walked his bike alongside the trunk toward the place where wood met earth. Bran's mind swirled with possibilities. Was it a freak lightning bolt? Had a car crashed into it? Maybe someone needs help. Could someone have cut it down deliberately? No amount of questioning could have prepared him for what he found at the base of the trunk.

Before Bran was able to fully process what he'd seen, he was knocked off his feet and sent hurtling into the branches that lay splayed on the forest floor in a snapped and twisted tangle. Bran's world narrowed to white limbs and still red leaves as his chest heaved with pained pants. He lay winded and dazed for a moment, until the pain in his leg demanded his attention. What had been a small cut on his ankle from the grip of his bike pedal was now a freely bleeding gash. Whatever hit me, must have done

something else to me too, Bran thought frantically.

There was a rattling sound not entirely different from the rustling leaves of an upright weir wood tree. The leaves all around Bran were limp and still though. "rrrrttttt" His head whipped around to follow the noise. To his immediate left the leaves were parting to reveal something that Bran truly did not want to see. He rolled and as he did a limb sprang up to slap wetly at something. Bran harnessed the momentum of his roll into a stumbling run. He did not look back the way they did in horror movies. Bran wanted to live way more than he wanted to see what was chasing him. He did hear some familiar rustling as if something was being held in a cage lined in weirwood leaves. Just as he crossed onto his own sparse lawn, Bran made out a splintering scream that followed him into his house as he slid the lock chain across its little track.

He felt the empty house around him huddle way from what was outside. It was late, but both Jon and his mom must be at work. Bran all but slapped the cheerful yellow headset off the wall and began frantically dialing the number to his mom's work. Over the beeps of the number pad, a low, ominous grating intruded. Will looked up to see the chain sliding, apparently unaided, across its little metal channel.

Bran gaped for a moment then dropped the phone to bounce lamely against the wall and bolted for the back door. He played in a world where magic was a thing and so spent no time trying to deny what his eyes were showing him. The last thing he heard before slamming yet another door was his mother's voice intoning the greeting for Torrhen's Square pharmacy. Bran dashed tears of desperation and longing from his eyes as he sprinted for the shed as fast as his spindly, though bully trained legs could take him.

Once he reached the sturdy old outbuilding, he wasted no time trying to bar the door but instead yanked the string on the bare bulb illuminating the dusty, cobwebbed interior. Will went straight for a box of shells and the gun. With shaking hands, he jammed bullets into the chamber, all the while listening for the deadly rattle.

Will took a deep, steadying breath, as Jon had taught him, and aimed at the door. Nothing happened. There was no sound, but Will felt something behind him and so turned. The light intensified to incandescence; then everything went dark.

2. Morning After

Summary for the Chapter:

Wherein we peek into Sandor's dreams of the past, and also catch a glimpse of Sansa's current mindset before discovering her precious baby is missing.

Notes for the Chapter:

If you want to truly know someone, watch them in the morning before reality has completely taken hold over dream space. We get to know the SanSan of this story. I hope you'll like how I blended and altered the characters to fit into the 80's.

Party like it's 1970

Paper lanterns of all colors swung from the heart tree in the school's courtyard. Prom was out here this year because most of the money for the dance went to cover a lark gone horribly wrong. Ironically the least part of the prank somewhat resembled the streamers it took the guys several hours to put up under the careful direction of the girls. It's still pretty, he supposed, if Sandor gave fuck about shit like that.

He was itchy and hot in the ruffled tux Joff forced him to wear. His quarterback had also forbidden him from combing his hair over the scars on his face on pain of receiving no passes when the scouts came to town next week. Consequently, Sandor's habitual glare was amplified and on unhindered display.

The guidance counselor, Petyr Baelish, was about to make some bullshit toast, and everyone stood around like assholes with charged glasses of lame punch when there was a squeal to his right. Sansa Stark, Joff's date, peeled out of the crowd of students beaming her brilliant, giddy smile all over the place like a beacon in a storm as she flew to her father's side where he stood at one of the four entrances to the courtyard.

Ned Stark was in a dress uniform, and the plain-faced bearded man looked as uncomfortable as Sandor felt. Sansa had been bitching earlier in the limo about how her father was supposed to chaperone alongside her

mother tonight when the mayor, Joff's father, called him away to a formal dinner with some important constituents. And sure enough, that bloody bugger stumbled in on the Sheriff's heels.

Sandor could feel Joff next to him stiffen like a board. The relationship between Robert Baratheon and his eldest son was strained at best. Sandor understood perfectly what it was like to have a farther that neglected you. Sometimes that understanding was the only thing that kept him from punching the ever-living shit out his QB and "friend."

Everyone's eye was now on an older, more elegant version of Sansa floating across the dance floor to fill her husband's punch glass. She was also beaming, and Sandor wondered how Ned Stark got to be such a lucky son of a bitch.

As Sandor was scrutinizing Sheriff Stark for any secrets to success the man might have printed in his cool gray eyes, a movement over Ned's shoulder caught his eye. The arrival of the town's football heroes from another generation had eclipsed the speech that Baelish called for moments ago. By the annoyed twitch of short man's narrow shoulders and the hateful glint in Little Fucker's eye, he was not best pleased about it. Otherwise, little man's face displayed a placid expression. Sandor wondered if the smarmy shit's eyes had ever been another color before whatever happened between him and Stark transpired, and the jealousy began to eat Baelish alive.

Sandor allowed his own gaze to flit back to Sansa for one brief glorious moment and contemplated the possibility of his gray eyes turning as green the guidance councilor's. Poor girl deserved better than a mewling cunt like Joff or an ugly hound like me. She could take her pick of any man in town, but she'd be better off picking someone outside Wintertown. She could be a model or an actress, but here she'd just be the reincarnation of her mother as he would probably end up dog catcher like his father unless some scout picked him up for a football scholarship. He was good, but so were a lot of guys. And so, he trained as if his life depended on it. And he stood by and watched as Joff treated Sansa like shit, though he wanted to murder the little bastard who literally held the Sandor's future in the palm of his hands. Only the golden boy's arm could get Sandor out of this fucking town. But one day he might decide that he'd rather leave Wintertown on a prison bus than a scholarship.

Petyr caught him staring and flicked a sneer at Sandor before the slight man raised his punch glass and began droning on about how chaos was a ladder that the lucky few could use to climb to great heights...

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The droning from the dream or flashback or whatever the fuck it was blended with the unnecessary droning from the weather girl on the living room TV as Sandor made his painful ascent towards consciousness. His frame would never fit on any couch that would fit in this shitty little house so his legs hung off at an odd angle. Not for the first time did he regret his hard and fast rule of keeping his pills in the bathroom cabinet and his gun by the door. Sandor hauled himself to his feet to shamble down the hall shedding yesterday's clothing in his wake. He was down to just jeans as he stopped at the fridge for his morning shower beer. A glance at the clock on the microwave told him Old Nan would be displeased when he finally drug his ass into the station.

One his way to the bathroom, he cracked the beer open one-handed as he turned loose his belt buckle with the other letting the weight of the metal and leather peel the kahki poly blend off him as he stepped painfully out of his pants. Sandor Clegane stood stark naked in the bathroom mirror as he twisted off the cap on the little orange bottle and shook out a hand full of relief. He could feel a storm front moving in as flashes of pain streaked through his knee. This was definitely a three-pill day. He slapped his hand to his open mouth, concentrating on the flex and ripple of muscle, doing everything he could to avoid looking at the pink puckered vertical lines burned into his face. This was no easy feat as Sandor's scars ran from his stubbled chin, through his lips, up his cheeks, across his left eyebrow and up into his hairline in straight, angry lines that twisted his features into a grotesque visage. *Be glad you have a left eye* he reminded himself for the umteenth jillion time as he ground the pills between his teeth, the bulge of his jaw muscle distorting the symmetry of one of the lines on his face. He took a swig of the beer and swished the bitter solution around his mouth before swallowing.

Sandor reached into the shower, slapped on the hot water, and took a long, loud piss while the water warmed up. He then climbed into the yellowed tub shower, all while nursing his breakfast from an

aluminum can. The scalding spray hit him mid-chest, and the thick pelt of his chest hair took most of the sting from the spray. No shower he'd been in recently was tall enough to spray down on him so he'd have to crouch to get his hair wet. His knee was not quite up to that, yet so Sandor stood for a moment letting the water and the dream run over him.

Usually, he only remembered his dreams if he woke up screaming, but the rare joy of seeing Sansa young and relatively carefree was...not shitty. Considering how that evening had ended, maybe his brain had just been warming up to the nightmare when the anchorwoman had delivered him from his usual fate. With a determined yank Sandor pulled his thoughts from the past and focused on the dream. His cock twitched. The muscles in his forearm bulged as he gave himself a cursory grope. Was he really going to do this? he wondered as he took himself more firmly in hand. *It's not as if I am stroking off to some teenager in a magazine*, he assured himself, as his hand mimicked the words in his mind. *It's my memory of her and I'll use it now like I used it then*. Flashes of creamy thighs topped with copper curls, and round tits tipped with rosy nips bloomed in his brain and Sandor began to fuck his hand in earnest. He followed the dream back to that crazy night and he could almost hear her peals of joy ringing in ears. Red hot pleasure rolled down his back with much more force than the shitty water pressure pushed his shower. Sandor's sac tightened and hot jizz painted the dingy tile whiter than he'd ever seen it. "Little Bird," he grunted as wave after wave of bliss radiated down his shaft, his balls kept coughing out more cum as he imagined Sansa writhing on the end of his cock, driven by the pursuit of her own pleasure. Sandor came until he was weak in the knees and all he could do was lean against the tile. The next thing he knew the water was tepid and the pain killers had kicked in. Time to start another day.

#

The smell of eggs and bacon drew Sansa away from the mirror rubbing her lips together to spread the coral lipstick evenly. Despite being dead tired when she arrived home from the late shift last night, she'd slept poorly. Bran was such a light sleeper that she was conscious of every toss and turn least she wake her little man. He

needed his sleep to grow strong.

Consequently, Sansa woke up looking hag-ridden. Once upon a time that would have bothered her a great deal. She was no longer that vapid, petty girl, though. Now she was a woman whose boss expected her to maintain a certain level of “professionalism.” That abstract apparently translated into a coat of foundation, lipstick, and mascara at the very least. Lothor Frey “didn’t hire the prettiest pharmacist in three states” to have her show up to work looking tired.” Sansa had suggested that not scheduling her back to back open and closing shifts would go a long way to curing that condition. His reply had been, “Someone has to cover Black Walder’s shift on bowling night.” Sansa had then proposed they do a straight trade with Black Walder taking her morning shift. Lothor had just laughed and said something about loosing customers to a hangover being bad for business.

Sansa knew intellectually that she was a liberated woman, her divorce paperwork was proof of that at least, but she often felt quite the opposite, especially when she looked at her paycheck. It was 2/3’s of what Black Walder made and he hadn’t actually gone to pharmacy school. The large disagreeable man just used the “big book of pills” in the back room to fill the prescriptions written by Doc Pycell with no thought of drug interactions or tendencies toward addiction. Really the man was a lawsuit waiting to happen, but since he was also a favorite of Old Walder Frey, Black Walder did basically whatever he wanted while pulling a generous paycheck for it.

Sansa made a mental effort to leave these woes in the bathroom to greet her boys with the positivity they deserved. She’d raised her brother Jon from a very young age alongside her own son to be the sort of man who cooked breakfast to help the family start the day with hot food in their bellies. The way she raised her boys was what Sansa had control over, not anyone else’s behavior, she reminded herself as she entered the kitchen with what she hoped was a bright smile pinned to her face.

Her smile fell when she found Jon alone. “Is Bran up?” Sansa asked around the cracked edges of her good intentions.

“I made tons of noise,” Jon explained with a shrug as he turned from the stove her frilly pink apron tied over his faded Clash tee shirt and

faded jeans. He avoided making eye contact with her by scraping eggs out of the pan onto the three plates set out on the dingy little kitchen table. "If he slept through that, then he needs to."

Or he's sick again, Sansa thought as headed down the hall toward Bran's room biting her tongue against berating Jon. He did what he thought was best by letting Bran sleep.

Sansa's heart came up into her throat when she found her son's room empty. Bran was not the neatest child and she didn't have time to make his bed for him every morning, so the blankets were piled haphazardly. Sansa could not tell if it had been slept in or not.

She rushed back up the hallway. "He's not back there. Could he have left early for school? What time did he get home yesterday?"

There was a frustrating beat of silence as Jon swallowed the eggs he'd shoveled into his mouth as she'd entered the kitchen, but she supposed she preferred that to seeing the eggs as he spoke. She'd done a good job drilling manners into him, just their mother would have wanted. "I didn't get home 'til late. I assumed he was already asleep."

"What?!" Sansa said incredulously. "You are not supposed to take shifts when I'm working!"

"The other cook called in. Bran was over at the Wheelers all day anyway." Color rose in Jon's cheeks as he pronounced the last name of one Bran's best friends. Normally Sansa would have pursued this new turn of events doggedly, but at this moment she had no thoughts other than Bran and his whereabouts. "I knew he'd be there late. We need the money, Sis," he reminded her needlessly.

Frustrated tears sprang into Sansa's eyes. She swiped at them angrily thinking of her two thirds pay, as she moved toward the sunshine yellow phone mounted to the wall. Sansa grasped and pulled her hand back from the cool smooth plastic as if she'd been burned. A jolt of panic and a vivid flashback to a hang-up call she'd received the night before flashed through her mind. There had been strange frozen clicks, a slamming door, then a high electric buzz before Sansa hung up assuming it was a prank. Now she was gripped by the certainty it

had been Bran, and he had been terrified.

Sansa replaced the headset and took several deep breaths attempting to dampen her panic. She believed what her instincts were screaming at her, but she had to make this call just to check. This call would be stressful in the best of circumstances. This was certainly not that. She felt Jon's reassurance tinged by a frisson of guilt as he continued to eat. Ghost padded out of the room he shared with Jon to lean heavily against her leg and lick her hand. With one last steadying breath, Sansa swept the headset off the hook and dialed a once familiar number.

"Wheeler residence," purred a petal smooth voice. *She is perfect even this early in the morning*, Sansa thought dejectedly.

"Hi, Marge. It's Sansa."

"Oh, hi Sansa!" came through bright and clear. Then more muffled, "Can you two quit bickering for one second." Then clear once again. "Sorry, Sans. What can I do for you? Wanna have lunch and get our nails done?"

If only that was my life. "No, I'm sorry. I can't this week. Was that Bran's voice I heard in the back ground?"

"No just my little roses jabbing at each other. I sent Bran home last night. Is everything all right?"

"Yes, I'm sure he just left for school early. Thanks, Marge. Have a nice day," Sansa managed to shove the pleasantries out of her mouth before she slapped the phone back onto the receiver. She clapped her hand over her mouth to stifle a sob, but the strangled sound that escaped brought Jon close up behind her.

"Sissa, don't cry." The use of this old name for her reminded Sansa that she'd been through ugly times before, a sentiment that shoved steel into her spine. After a pile-up of tragedies left them orphans, a confused little Jon would often call her Mama. Sansa sensed it was out of a need to be like the other kids as much as that she looked so much like their mother, but it would set Joff off. They'd come up with "Sissa" as a compromise between sister, which felt too formal to

both of them, and mama. "I'll go to his school and look for him."

Sansa pulled herself away from Jon, unable to accept comfort from him. "Eat first, please. I think we are going to need our strength before this is over." Sansa picked up the phone and dialed another number that also unfortunately ingrained in her.

Notes for the Chapter:

What do you all think of the way the flashback is formatted? Is it clear what is happening. Taking a page (or more) from GoT a lot of what is going on this the "present" of this story is linked to the past so there will lots of flash backs. Also feed back on difference in Sandor's scars is appreciated. Can you guess what happened based on my description?

3. Missing Persons

Summary for the Chapter:

Sansa files a missing persons report for her son. We flash back to SanSan's meet ugly.

Notes for the Chapter:

There is some really bad language in this chapter. For those familiar with me and my liberal swearing both in the story and comments section, you maybe laughing. Though I am pretty liberal with my four letter swear words there are some words that I do not use in real life and so do not often use in my writing because It's just not something I think so I don't think to write it. These gems are used in canon though and so I copied them here, because it felt right it. If you do not care to encounter the 3 letter eff word for a gay person or its que companion in a derogatory context mind the asterisks.

By the time he reached the station, Sandor was walking upright, with an only barely perceptible limp, and looking forward to his morning donut. The sugar would help him shift from beer in the shower to whiskey in his coffee so that he could coast through another day.

The familiar sight of Thoros and Beric playing cards grounded Sandor enough that when Old Nan started waving Pepto pink message notes in his face, he hardly even snapped at her. “Stealing the Children of the Forest statues out of Jon Umber’s yard again? I’ll get right on that after lunch,” he assured her before wedging a donut in his mouth so that he could both balance his coffee and rearrange Beric's hand. *It's like the man doesn't care if he wins or losses.* “Mornings are for coffee and contemplation,” he growled around his donut.

“Yes, well on a more pressing note,” the old woman’s voice was at once penetrating and soothing, and Sandor could see how she’d made an excellent nursemaid for so many years, “Sansa Stark can't find her son this morning.” Sandor had to exert all the control he had not to

jerk his head around to glare at the woman who ran his office as she'd seemingly picked the thought right out of his brain. "Sansa is very upset," she continued, naming the woman she had once been a nanny to. "She -"

Sandor had to cut her off. He was coming dangerously close to caring. He jerked the donut out of his mouth in case he hadn't made him self heard around it earlier. "Nan we've discussed this. Mornings are for coffee and contemplation," he repeated, turning into his office as he shoved the donut back into his mouth.

The golden ring dropped from his mouth at the sight of Sansa Stark sitting on his desk. She was so much hotter all grown up, even if her maturity had a haunted air about it. The sugary goodness was only saved by his early morning reflexes that were still not that great as he bounced the donut from hand to hand a couple of times before getting a firm grip on it and himself.

Sansa was an absolute mess. To be fair, she'd been a bit of a mess since senior prom. And then that whole thing with the baby and her parents... Sandor had suddenly had ten thousand things on his own plate, including the war he went off to fight in. There had been no room in his head for Sansa Stark. Or at least that is what he told himself as he sidled around his desk.

"Help yourself," he grunted sarcastically as she had not only already poured a slug of secret stash whiskey into his #1 Sheriff mug, but also found his emergency pack of smokes and was shakily pressing a lit one between garishly painted lips.

"Thank you," she chirped. "I would not have imposed without asking if you'd bothered to show up to your own office on time. Also, the combination to your safe is zero's then your high school jersey number. Why not just leave everything out on your desk?" Everybody knows you're a worthless alcoholic; Sandor heard her unspoken words, as he slotted the triplicate missing persons report in the typewriter and began hitting the keys with more force than necessary.

"His legal name is Brandon Stark," she corrected him just as is finger headed for the "B" key. Her lavender perfume swirled around him

with her cigarette smoke. He looked up to see her leaned way over his desk, watching him peck out the letters. Her shirt gaped.

"Bet Joff fucking loves that," he grated through a laugh as he entered the information she'd just imparted.

"It was a concession, so certain things do not come to light," she informed him succinctly through lips gone stiff and white with stress beneath her horrid orange lipstick. *Why did women hide the natural color of their lips? Was it so that their nipple color would come as some sort of shock?*

"Are you sure you want me to make this official?" He asked worried that Joff could use this in future custody battles.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't. I've been waiting over an hour to do just that." Her usually crisp consonants were starting to sound a little soggy. "Why do you ask?" Her tone was definitely getting more defensive.

"Boy his age is age is probably just playing hooky."

"Not my Bran," she shot back sounding like every mother.

"My Mam thought I was on the debate team when really I was playing grab-ass with Brienne Tarth." It was technically accurate, though really, he'd been helping Brienne train for the football team in exchange for her pretending to go out with him so Bronn Wheeler would lay off him about his crush on the head cheerleader who was, of course, dating the quarterback. Sansa had been that head cheerleader. The sadistic blond fuck had knocked Sansa up and then run around on her to the point where she kicked him out, or so the story went around town. With a father like Joff, the boy could be out in the woods cutting open cats for all Sandor knew.

"He's not like you Clegane. " Sansa spit the words at him, and he expected the stubble on his face to stiffen with frost from the chill of her words. *Is that resentment in her voice?* Sandor's mouth twitched with the knowledge that the ice princess had just entered the building, though he also remembered when she used to burn hot. "He's not like me." She continued taking a deep drag off the cigarette.

"He's not like anyone, really." She blew the smoke up, though he clearly would not care if she puffed it right in his face. A secret smile played on her lips and melted her bright blue eyes that were directed toward the ceiling as if contemplating something heavenly. Suddenly his shirt felt too small, and he rubbed at his chest. Before Sandor could cover his emotional reaction by reaching for his bottle of Tums her face flashed feral. "The kids at school are mean. They make fun of him and call him names." She turned naked, wounded eyes on him, and the subtext was clear: the way they used to do to you until you got big enough to start doing serious damage.

Sandor could not meet her eyes. He couldn't have sympathy for the kid or he'd have to have some for himself. He didn't judge Sansa for having divorced Joff like everyone else in this damned town. Her life would certainly be easier if she could have ignored the little shit's infidelities and just enjoyed all the perks of vast wealth as well as social and political power. Sandor was proud of her for running Joff out of her life. But he couldn't show that if he wanted to keep his job as sheriff. Lucky he was good at keeping his feelings to himself.

Sansa was going on about the kid's clothes, and he seized on that to cover his inattentiveness. "His clothes. What's wrong with his clothes?"

"I don't know. Does it matter?"

"Maybe."

***"Look he's just sensitive. Joff used to say he was queer, even called him a..." her mouth crimped in extreme distaste, but a rolling motion with his hand finally drug the word from her, "fag," but in an outraged whisper. ***

"Is he?" Sandor asked urgently. It was something that Gregor used to taunt him with as well before...Sandor slammed down the gates of his mind on that line of thought. He needed a clear head if he was going to track down Sansa's kid, and this whole shittery just took a dark turn toward a public men's rooms and child sex trafficking. The last thing he needed was to toss a flicked Bick into the dumpster fire that was his twisted psyche.

"He's missing is what he is," she seethed through clenched teeth her flaming lips were hiked up in disgust, and he saw that old fire in her ignite. He was frightened by it as he hadn't been in a long time.

It sparked something in him, though. "When was the last time you heard from Joff?" He picked up a pen and located a pad on his cluttered desk.

"It's been over a year, " she replied primly. "This has nothing to do with Joff."

"Ninety-nine out of a hundred missing kids are with a relative."

"This isn't that, " she repeated flatly. "This is the one time it's different. I feel it." And in spite of himself, Sandor could feel it too. He mostly acted out of instinct, though he was good at finding logical excuses to maintain his facade of logic before everything else. "If it will make you feel better, I will contact Joff and ask him. He won't talk to you after..."

"After I beat the ever-loving shit out of him, " Sandor finished with more satisfaction than one should probably have about a beating that was nearly a decade and a half old. But it was still one of Sandor's favorite memories and the last thing he truly recalled from the night that had such far-reaching consequences, not just for himself, but for Sansa and the whole damn town.

"Can you just set aside all your ego bullshit and find my son?"

Hearing the profanity on her lips sent a familiar thrill down his spine, but Sandor had to admit it was a valid request, so he finished out the report with just the facts.

#

A chill wind ruffled Sansa's hair as she headed to her barely still kicking Pinto. Even so, she felt inexplicably better leaving the station than she had going in. Just getting a hug from Old Nan made her feel like a child with solvable problems, again. The old dear had seemed like an incarnation of the Crone herself as she reminded Sansa of one of her father's favorite sayings, a line from one of the old Epics: When

the snow flies/the lone wolf dies, /but the pack survives. Sansa had protested to her old nanny that a pack needs at least three members and without Bran..."Sweet summer child, " the old woman said without the malice those words usually held, "just go in and sit down. The Sheriff will be along before too long." Sansa had obeyed thinking it remarkable that Old Nan should say Sheriff in exactly the same way to describe both her father and Sandor Clegane.

As she drove away from the station, Sansa let her mind wander down memory lane. Images of Sandor as she'd first known him floated unbidden from the vaults of her mind. He'd been a skinny, bloody mess that day in the Summer before Sophomore year when he'd tripped out of a thicket of weir woods behind her. His way-too-big-for-his-body hands clamped around the worn shoulders of her dad's old worn plaid shirt, so his momentum did not knock her flat. The grip was so firm and sure that for a fleeting moment, Sansa thought she was going to find her father standing behind her as she turned. The reality of a boy with a face half-carved like a weir wood tree dripping blood instead of sap, popping out of the white trunks in her godswood was so shocking that she couldn't help but draw back in fear. "That's right, run!" He snarled as he gave her an ungentle push.

Sansa instinctively obeyed, the sticks and twigs whipping at pale legs laid bare by cut-offs she would not be caught dead wearing in town but were fine for back woods meandering. She could hear something big behind them blundering through the undergrowth. "What are we running from? " she panted for the boy was not chasing her as evidenced by the first few strides he took which, would have easily let him overtake her if she had been the prey.

"Brother, " he rasped.

That word drew Sansa out of her panic, and she veered North down a familiar path. "This way."

The boy followed her. Curses and bellowed threats of the vilest sort hounded them up the twisting game trail. Soon Sansa could hear faint rustling in front of her. "Wolf and friendly incoming. Monster on heels, maybe twenty feet back, " Sansa called as the trail opened into a clearing. She hoped the radio language that her brothers almost exclusively communicated in, both in person and over their hand

helds, would keep her and the weir boy from getting shot.

There were barrels pointed at her when she burst into the clearing where her brother mentioned they were going to be shooting in this morning over breakfast. Robb's vivid blue eyes were clearly visible over the scope of his rifle as her words had signaled him to lower his gun. Theon's face was still obscured as he had not dropped his rifle and it was trained behind and to the right of Sansa. "We need cover, " she said, moving so that she stood between Sandor and Theon's gun.

"C'mon then, " Robb barked. And then to Theon. "Give cover and fall back." They moved in eerie tandem. Her father was a veteran and had taken training his sons, true born and adopted, very seriously, and it showed.

Sansa pulled Sandor along by the hand to the back of the clearing, while Robb and Theon walked backward, shielding them from trail head. Her brother's gun was trained on the obvious opening of the path, while Theon, who was the better shot, continuously scanned the wall of trees for a surprise attack.

The attack was not a surprise. The giant brute of a near-man blundered out of the trees along the path of least resistance, ranting and raving about stolen pornography. He halted at the site of the guns trained on him, but his face cracked into a horrific grin as if welcoming the challenge of two armed men. "You won't shoot, " he dared.

"Pierce his ear if he takes another step, Theon." Robb said calmly.

"All I want is my brother. Send him over, and we'll go."

"We heard your plans for him. He's safer with us," Robb said, bracing his gun on his shoulder.

"Yeah, how is that any of your gods damned business?"

"I'm the sheriff's son, and this is our land. Do you claim sanctuary?" Robb directed the question over his shoulder toward the weir boy standing beside her though slightly forward as if to protect her should his brother be crazy enough to rush the guns.

"Aye." The boy said, and Sansa could hear the Westerlands in his voice now.

"I don't recognize your Pegan bullshit, " his brother said, shifting from side to side making it harder for Theon to keep a bead on him.

"Do you recognize our superior force?" Robb asked low and deceptively calm.

"I'm gonna come over there, jerk the gun out of your hand, and fire it right up your ass, pretty boy. Teach you a little something about superior force."

"C'mon then," Robb invited in a menacing growl.

The Mountain of a boy/man lowered his head and charged. Theon's first bullet passed right through where his target's ear had been. His second took the guy in his meaty right arm which caused the hurtling mass of flesh to flinch, but not really slow down. He and Robb collided with a crackling whump, and Robb went over backward.

The instant their brothers connected the bloody boy shot forward and scooping Robb's gun up where it had fallen, and began swinging vicious blows at his brother's lower back. His sibling roared at that and sat up though he still pinned a wildly squirming Robb by sitting on his chest. Theon also entered the fray jabbing the butt of his rifle into the bleeding wound that he'd created. The outnumbered man roared and punched Robb repeatedly in the face and then turned his attention to his brother aiming a vicious swat at the kid's bleeding head, just as another rifle report made Sansa nearly jump out of her skin. The boy dropped to the ground immediately and in doing so, eluded his brother's blow.

Sansa was so absorbed in the fight in front of her that she had not noticed when her father entered the clearing from the East, with a friend towering just to his left. "What in the Stranger's bloody asshole is going on here?" Mayor Robert Baratheon bellowed. As usual when in the woods his wiry salt and pepper hair and beard were atangle with sticks and leaves, and he looked like a part of the wild had scrapped off a tree and fell into a pile of rags, looted a corpse for its weapons, and took up the wild hunt. His smoking barrel pointed one-

handed at the sky.

Her father's however was trained on his son's assailant. "Theon," he growled, "get the boy out of the way. You," her father's voice went glacial "get off my son or feed the wolves." As if to underscore the threat, howls echoed off the sky.

Theon and the boy moved away quickly as the interloper growled back. He rocked to his feet with terrifying quickness and made as if to kick Robb. A bullet parted his dark, unkempt hair and grazed his scalp. Ned cocked his rifle and chambered another round as Mayor Baratheon took aim. "I'm not near as good as he is so if I fire at you, I will shoot to kill. Probably hit you in the gut though. That's a long way to die."

It was almost painful to for Sansa to watch the slow procession of logic grind through the rage, the thick skull into whatever passed for this brute's brain. He stepped back from Robb and aimed his finger like a pistol at the boy. "You gotta come home sometime, pup." He jerked his hand and made puschhhh sound that was threatening though it sounded nothing like gunfire. Then he turned and lumbered from the clearing.

Notes for the Chapter:

What did you all think? I think there will be a hefty flash back during most chapters. How do you all feel about that? Is the back story interesting to you?

4. Entrances

Summary for the Chapter:

Another flash back to Prom. This one is steamier than the last, but probably not the smuttiest thing that happens at that prom. A nameless girl makes her entrance.

Party like it's 1970

"Ned, what are you doing here? I thought you couldn't make it?" Cat's bright blue eyes were beaming mischief at him over the rim of her punch cup like they had not for 15 years as they swayed to strains of a sad old song about a good queen and her silver dragon. It was one of Ned's favorites as there were several verses about her journey North, which appealed to him on the deepest of levels. Consequently he and Cat had danced to this song dozens of times. This time was very different though. Cat's normal correct dance posture from her ballroom competition days was missing. She was a pliant liquid heat in his arms flowing up against him in her silky dress like steam from the hot springs beneath Winterfell. One of her long elegant hands curled around her plastic punch cup and the other curled in the hair at the nape of his neck. The circles she was making in his scalp with her nails were waking his wolf.

"The meeting went South as soon as Robert and I heard the Freys want to open some sort of laboratory Southwest of Wintertown, so we left early. I couldn't think of a single place I'd rather be than with my two girls." Ned drained his own cup of punch before crumpling the plastic and banking it off the side of the nearest trash can to cover his half-truth. He didn't lie often, and almost never to Cat, but he wanted to fan the fire of the heat he saw smoldering in her eyes. Still, he superstitiously craned his neck to peer over his lady's auburn up-do to try to spot their daughter's brighter loose curls, as if having them both in his sight-line could protect them from telling a lie before a heart tree. Ned caught a flash of Sansa's blazing locks around a white tuxedo jacket just before Cat tiptoed into his view, snagging his misty gaze purposefully with her own, searing one. Her eyes were the color of the flames in the heart of a forge and Ned felt them scalding his soul. It was hard to see anything in the courtyard with the weir wood streaming the school's gray and white even without being consumed by his wife's fiery eyes, so he stopped trying. Ned found the

decorations more than a little sacrilegious anyway, though he was sure the old tree had been hung with much worse in its day.

All these hazy winding thoughts were blown from his mind when Cat licked her scarlet lips. "I'm glad you did. You look so handsome in your fancy uniform," she purred, her soft southern accent seeming to stroke him everywhere as she ran her nails down his back. Ned prided himself on being able to spot his mate's moods a mile away. It was what he attributed his long, happy marriage to. But he had rarely seen these signals from his very proper wife outside the bedroom, and never in public. He was at once a little shocked by her behavior, but also just as that it was such a turn on. He was gripped by the desire to see how far he could push her before she fell all to blushing.

In a bold and hitherto untried by him dance move, Ned spun Cat out admiring the grace that she rarely got to display on the dance floor with him. When he reeled her back into his embrace, he dipped her very deeply, trailing his nose along the modest neckline of her deep red dress. They both gasped as he scented her arousal and his manhood stiffened against her belly. Giving him the shock of his life, his wife of nearly 20 years, hooked her silk-stockings clad leg high enough over his hip to bare her black garter straps and ground herself against the bulge in his pants while her spiked heel jabbed at one of his ass cheeks. Everything up til now could be explained by being swept away by the rising tide of teenage hormones, but Cat would be mortified in the morning if anyone saw her behaving like this. Had she been drinking? Ned thought as he kissed her deeply (no she just tasted like punch) while dragging her across the dance floor in what he hoped looked like one of those fancy Essos dance moves that always made Cat so swoony when she watched the Edd Peake Show. They were closest to the Southern exit from the courtyard, so Ned headed that direction as his prim wife attempted to suck his tongue out of his head.

The sound of the door closing them into a dim, deserted, and locker-lined corridor almost drown out the sound of tearing fabric. Ned half turned to investigate the noise, as Catelyn dropped to her knees in front of him, her nibble fingers at his fly. The sound of his own zipper coming down became the only sound in his world until the sound of his wife hungrily taking his ice hard member into her mouth eclipsed that. This was not something she did often lately as Jon was now old enough for her to be contemplating her next baby, so Ned just leaned against the door enjoying himself for a moment before that thought caught up with him. Door. Old gods, Cat is sucking my dick in the school with people on the other side of the

door. Ned tried really hard to dredge up the part of himself that would be appalled by that, especially since one of the people on the other side of the door was his precious only darling daughter. It was as if that part of him was deeply asleep, or had been beaten into unconsciousness by the part of him that would never tire of watching his wife's crimson lips sliding up and down his shaft. She'd shocked him by doing so on their wedding night, leaving maroon smears then as now. Now as then, Ned slid his fingers into her intricately coiffed tresses and made a fist. Hairpins plinked onto the floor, and he used this new hold to guide her movements. She moaned around him and began to suck harder as her hand disappeared beneath her dress. If Cat had ever touched herself for pleasure, Ned had no knowledge of it. He was almost positive that he given her release on a few occasions that were some of his most treasured memories. Her own satisfaction just never seemed to matter that much to her, as it was his pleasure that gave her babies. "Oh gods Cat, let me see." The corner of her lips turned up, sexier than anything Ned had ever seen, until she did as he bid.

Cat rucked her dress up to display her small clothes pushed aside, two fingers buried in her glistening auburn curls. Ned's sac tightened at the sight of her. The sound of her lips breaking suction was deafening in the quiet hallway. "In me, Ned, please," she begged.

He knew she wasn't asking him to release inside her mouth. He used his hold in her hair to turn her around as he hit his knees behind her. "Keep touching yourself, my love," he growled as he pushed her onto all fours and rucked up her dress. The silk of her undergarments caught on the callouses of his hands as he yanked them down to her knees, bearing her sex to him. He could see the tips of her fingers rubbing circles into the top of her womanhood. His manhood pulsed as it wept with the need to be inside her. Still, he took the time to slide a finger into her folds. He may not have always given her pleasure, but he never took her before she was ready. Cat moaned. She was sopping wet, so Ned grasped her gorgeous round hips and thrust into her. She emitted a guttural cry, and he froze.

"Maiden, Mother and Crone, Ned don't stop!" Her voice rang out as she slammed back onto him, letting out another groan. Ned had never heard his wife take the gods' names in vain, and he felt his sac tighten again.

"Cat..." He couldn't formulate words, but she seemed to understand.

Catelyn Stark craned her long elegant neck so she could look him in the eye with the wickedest smile he had ever seen. "Fuck me, Ned. Fuck me until I am screaming your name."

Ned tangled his fingers in her the molten river of her hair and proceeded

to do just that. He slid in and out of her as she tightened around him, panting harder and harder until she was begging and pleading with him to never stop fucking her. She felt so good that he was biting the inside of his cheek and thinking gruesome thoughts to keep from spilling too soon as he drove deeper into the stream of her pleasure. After an ecstatic eternity Cat went totally stiff and then convulsed around him. An instant later, Ned's howl of pleasure joined the echoes of his name bouncing off the metal-lined walls.

Cat sagged back against him as the aftershocks of her pleasure milked the last of his seed from him along with the last of his will to stay conscious. His last thought as he sank down on top of her was her comfort as he curled his arm around her torso to cradle her head in his hand so the hard linoleum would not be her pillow. He lost consciousness with his head pressed against her back, listening to the precious sound of her heartbeat.

November 7, 1983

I am free. I know this because there are tree parts poking my feet. It hurts, but it feels better than the cold, smooth floors of the place where I was not free.

It hurts in my stomach too. I think I am missing food. This is one of a hundred new sensations. I had once missed food in the smooth place. It was a punishment.

I smell food. I follow that smell though my feet hurt.

There is a building, and I am weary of it. I don't want to be trapped again. I am afraid.

I miss food more than I am afraid. There is a door. I rush up to it, fearing it will be locked like so many previous doors. It is not.

The smell of food is so overwhelming that my stomach seems to lay flat against my spine as if it could use the bones to climb closer to the food. But I can't actually see anything to eat. The room I am in is all metal. The reek of food tells me this might be where food comes from, but I've never been in such a room. Food always comes to me on a tray. I look desperately around, but missing food is like a veil over my eyes. I see no trays, and I want to cry in frustration and emptiness.

As the tears start to form and my vision blurs, I see something that looks kind of like a tray and smells a lot like food. I hurry over. The yellowish strips don't look like any food I've ever seen, but since leaving the smooth place, I have come to find that there is a lot I

have not seen. I take an experimental bite. I'd rather get sick than continue to be empty for one moment longer. It's so hot I burn my tongue. I keep eating through the pain. It is too salty, but I kind of like that.

I am so busy gobbling food that I do not hear the man who grabs me by the shoulders. His bushy orange eyebrows make a V. I have studied a book of facial expressions so that I will know what people are thinking when I see their faces in the black place. His brows tell me he is very angry. I must have been eating his food. His fingers dig into my arms like the orderlies'. I catch the word "St-ee-l" which I do not know. And "boi" which seems a little familiar. I am just about to do something to get free when he lets me go with a little shove. The eyebrows are now trying to meet with his wild orange hair, and I am interpreting that as shock. He is gigantic with a fluffy orange beard. Anything that could shock him would probably be dangerous to me as well. I crouch and look behind me. There is nothing there so I turn back to him.

His face crumples in on itself in what I take to be pity. He takes a step back from me. He pushes the food closer to me. "Go ahead. Eat. Can't serve it now, you've had your fingers all over it." His face is smoothing out to a neutral expression, so I straighten up into a neutral posture. I am still very empty, so I do as he says.

He drops some strips that are like the ones I am eating only lighter into a bubbling liquid. "Hot. Don't touch." He said very slowly, though his words are strangely shaped. Then he goes to an opening in the wall and yells. "Everybody out! Yes, I know you didn't get your fries Edd. I put some on, but you'll have to take them to go. Everybody out!"

Notes for the Chapter:

This is my first Ned/Cat smut. I pulled back on the language at first trying to demonstrate Ned's conservative attitudes. Let me know what you all think. Are the flash backs confusing? Any guesses as to what is going on at Prom?

So I'm trying something different by using first person present tense. I'm hoping to show that El thinks differently. I intend to shift away from this as she spends more time out in the real world. Let me

know what you think.

5. Chapter 5

Summary for the Chapter:

Sandor meets the party. Sansa and Jon hunt for their pack member

Notes for the Chapter:

This one is a short one, but it will make it out before the weekend :)

Sandor tipped his hat and a wink at the school secretary and pulled the good side of his face into a smirk that chicks seemed to dig for no particular reason that he could fathom. Roz, he thought her name was, blushed as only a red head can, and stammered the names into the microphone, calling the boys to the office.

Principle Luwin offered up his office for the interview and Sandor ambled in with Lieutenant Dondarrion. "Why do you do that?" Beric asked Sandor as they arranged themselves good cop/bad cop style, Beric in a chair with a note pad, Sandor slouched against a desk with site lines through the open door.

"My last thing ended kinda rough a while back, and I'm ready for the next one," Sandor replied low and gravelly while eyeing Miss Next openly.

"They all end rough," Beric observed. "And it'll keep on like that until you make some changes."

Sandor chuckled bitterly. "As if I were interested in changing."

It was then that the boys came through the door like an upended basket full of puppies all geeky limbs and too big hands tangled up in each other pushing and pulling through the door with nervous energy. Sandor studied them passively to give them time to settle. One was bigger than the others, but no less gangly, promising further growth to come. He had a familiar look to his stormy blue eyes, and Sandor figured he must have gone to school with one of the kid's

parents. One was rounder than the others with a mop of curly brown hair and no teeth. This oddity did not stop the kid from smiling, laughing and talking though. That was weird. The kid probably got picked on a lot, and Sandor took a moment to be grateful that one of the kids in the group hit his growth spurt early so they'd all survive. One of the kids had dark summer Islanders skin. There were not a lot of folks like that in the North. He'd probably dominate in sports in a few years.

As Sandor was smugly contemplating a future winning season, the boys settled down. He opened with some gruff questions about where's and when's to establish a timeline. The boys tumbled over themselves yapping about some geeky crap that Sandor recalled being into before his "accident." He growled in irritated response because all the things from before pissed him off. That was when he was happy and free. A dead time that he did his best to bury. The boys failed to pick up on his irritation until he barked, "One at a gods damned time."

All three boys jumped, and their response was painfully familiar. *Fuck. Now you're Gregor scaring kids? Get your shit together, man.* "You," he directed his voice a bit more gently at the middle boy whose name was...Sandor glanced at his notes...Wheeler, but who had the Baratheon blues of the former town Mayor who had been known for slinging his seed far and wide. That was why the kid looked familiar. *But Wheeler? What the fuck was Bronn's last name doing hung around this kid's neck?* Sandor had not bothered to check in with 'the team' after returning from his tour and a stint as a city cop, relying on Beric and Old Nan to interface with the public for him. *Maybe it's time that I pay some old friends a visit.* Now that he'd seen Sansa, how much worse could it get?

"Kingsroad," the kid said clearly and with more self-possession than most kids his age managed when being scowled at by scarred law enforcement. He looked Sandor right in the face without flinching as he spoke. "It's a real road, but with a made-up name." He went on to describe its location and finished with a firm offer to help. The other boys immediately echoed him in a way that made Sandor's head feel fit to split.

Sandor started out growling no's, but they talked over him until he lost his shit. "No! After school, go straight home. I don't need any more chirping mothers in my office tomorrow morning." Just to be clear he listed off as many of their adolescent bullshit excuses and finished up with, "This is no Bran the Builder Tale where the Prince who was Promised is going to ride up on a horse named Glory and deliver your friend back to you," Sandor assured them citing a jumble of different events from the book they'd been arguing about earlier.

"The horse's name was Honor," the toothless kid corrected him, and his friends all shooshed him as Sandor's brow lowered.

"Aye, there was a horse named Stranger too. Is that who you want coming for you? Some big son of a bitch who snatches up kids to sell 'em back to their families. Stay the fuck home today." Sandor rose to his full height to intimidate them. "Do I make myself clear?"

After a chorus of "yes sirs" that ground on his nerves, he and Beric took their leave.

#

1980 something

Sansa drifted up to the ruins of a once-great fortress her hair steaming behind her the same brilliant color as the leaves falling all around her. It was basically a pile of rubble, but there was one room left with four walls and flagstone floor. Her father had told she and her brothers stories about how his Grandfather had rehung the door for his father. Sansa blessed her ancestor for choosing stout weir wood as she tucked the videos under her arm before raising her hand to knock. This lair was once her adolescent hideout. Above the door she wrapped upon was a sign that had originally been lettered by her father, embellished by her aunt, carved by her brother, repainted with flowers by herself, repainted again by Jon.

She was challenged by the high thin voice that was the joy of her life. "Bealor the Blessed," she gave this week's password echoing up from the annals of history. Sansa could not be prouder of her smart boy.

"Enter," Bran called.

She did so finding him curled up with A Dance with Dragons. "Are you sure you're ready for that one?" she asked, remembering being much older

when she'd read the Great Epics of Westeros. Even so, she was very unsettled by them.

"I don't get scared anymore," Bran assured her the lamplight glinting in his steely gray eyes. That same light warmed and caught the sparks in his auburn hair, darker than hers, more like mother and Robb's. Sansa's eyes swam for a moment at the thought of the uncle, and grandmother Bran would never meet.

"Not even of Mad Jesters or Hedge Witches?" Sansa asked, holding up new releases featuring last year's Strangerween monsters so that they covered her face and gave her a moment to recover her composure.

"Awesome!" Bran exclaimed. "Which one should we watch first?"

"Whichever one you want, sweetie" she said, tickling him.

#

Bran's howls of laughter echoed up through time to blend with Sansa and Jon's calls as they spiraled out from Winterfell calling for their lost pack member. Bright sparks of leaves trailed down on them as if struck from the flint and steel of the lowering sky. The air was chilled, and Sansa wished she could recall what Bran had been wearing when he left the house. *Does he have a jacket? How the hell would I know? I'm always at work.* She was feeling despondent, and it gave her calls a keening quality that made them haunting while it carried the sound further in all directions.

Notes for the Chapter:

We start the chapter off with a bit of an alteration in Sandor's character, at least from my view point. This Sandor is going to be a bit of ladies man in the clumsy way that Jim Hopper is. He's a big fish in a small pond. And the uniform, chicks dig it. There are other reasons which will be divulged. Just know that this is one of the ways that this Sandor tends toward Jim.

One of the biggest reaches in the fic is Gendry to Mike. We don't meet Gendry in the books 'til he's like 16ish. Hard to believe, but maybe he had an awkward phase. Obviously here he's the same age as Hot Pie and Lommy so early teens. Are you interested in the inconsistency around his eyes and

name? It's something that I can delve into, or gloss over depending on how you guys feel.

I am particularly proud of making certain pop culture references and historical references Westerosi. Rate my success with that. Do you like it or find it distracting?

6. Lost and Found

Summary for the Chapter:

We start in El's head. Introduce Lysa in a bit of an unexpected place, but I promise when it all comes together it'll make sense. Sandor finds something that makes him feel the gravity of the situation. This triggers a flash back.

Notes for the Chapter:

It's another short one. Been navigating a move and then I came home to find an inch of water all over my house. So much stuff to be sorted and tossed. Hopefully I'll have another chapter for you all on Friday.

The taste of meat is an explosion on my tongue. There is something different about this food that makes it brighter and heavier than the bland food from the smooth place.

The hairy man in front of me is asking me questions that have no meaning for me, but I am too focused on the food to think of anything but getting more of it into my mouth. A hand clamps around my wrist. "What is your name, girl?"

I make eye contact with him and consider popping a blood vessel in his brain if his grip becomes any tighter.

His icy eyes fall to my arm. The sharpness of his gaze makes me try to tuck my arm in reflexively, but my physical strength is nothing compared to his. His expression reads fear and disgust...horror? What can be so terrible about some marks on my arm? I was very young when they'd appeared on my skin after a very deep sleep. They hurt for a few days, but it's nothing compared to the other things that have been done to me. Or things I have done. "What is that?" he demands. "What is it?"

This question is as difficult as the others he'd asked. I bend down to

take another bite, and the food is yanked out of my hand. My eyes flash up to meet his, and I am now even more seriously considering the blood vessels in his brain. He is not phased at all as he puts the food plucked out of my hand behind his crossed forearms. “No answers, no food,” his gravelly voice is accented the same as many people I’ve searched for in the black. They call themselves Free Folk. Papa calls them Wildings.

I take an angry breath in through my nose that only reminds me how good the food smells. Earlier, I watched him take the food out of a very cold box. It had not even smelled like food at first. The bushy man put it on a hot surface, and as it made a hissing sound, it started to smell so good I thought I might tear a chunk off. He admonished me not to, and when I reached out, he chased me into the room that was full of tables waving the meat turning tool at me whooping threats that I am fairly sure he would not carry out. I was not sure that I could do what he did to make the meat smell like food, and that is the only reason why I don’t kill him where he sits keeping me from the food. The question he asked tumbles through my head as I struggle to find an answer that will get me the food back “Me. I’m 011.”

His fluffy orange brows meet over eyes showing the whites. I interpret that as surprise and snatch the food out from behind his folded arms that glint with hair that looks like the inside of the wiring I yanked out of the security system last night. He does nothing to block me and does not even protest, but continues to stare as I continue to eat. I am chewing a third bite when he stands and crosses the room to a piece of plastic and begins speaking into it. I can’t hear him very well as there is a spinning device that blows air around the room, making a terrible squeaking noise. It is irritating but also obscuring potentially important information. I use my mind to yank out the wires that carry electricity to the device, just in time for him to put the plastic down. My head tilts in fascination. The wires are the same color as his arm hair too.

#

Lysa sat behind a desk set up on a platform that allowed her a commanding view over several rows of women wearing bulky headsets. The room was absolutely quiet, save for the scratching of pencils on steno pads. A perfectly manicured hand shot into the air and a flash of jealousy cramped Lysa’s stomach, as a finely dressed

man glided across the room and practically crawled under the headset with that bottle red harlot.

Lysa swept her own magnificent auburn locks over one shoulder in answer to a tug on her sleeve. Her son scrambled up into her lap and bushed aside her shirt and bra to fasten his sweet cupid's bow mouth on her nipple. A wave of euphoria swept over Lysa as she felt her milk let down, but even that was not enough to wash the jealousy from her system as she watched Petyr flash a grin at little Miss Manicure and bow over her supple white hand.

He straightened with his characteristic economic grace and hurried from the room with his security detail at his heels.

#

Sandor, Beric, and Thoros fanned out through the woods along 'The Demon Way' looking for any signs of Bran. Almost as if they were practiced at hunting through the woods, they took turns calling out the lost boy's name. A scathing gray wind made the light change swiftly as it blew leaves from the trees and clouds across the sky like ghosts.

Sandor caught a glint of metal and crunched out of formation into the underbrush releasing the smell of damp leaves in his wake. He reached into a pile of flame-colored leaves and pulled up a silver bike. Just as Sansa had described it the license plate on the back read SUMMER. "Nymeria's tits!" he cursed foully.

"Find something, chief?" Thoros asked.

"Only the kid's most important companion and trusted steed. No way he'd left it here. Bike like this is a Destrier to a kid like Bran." *What had Sansa gone without to afford it? Or was it a guilt gift from Joff?*

"...unless he was carried off," Thoros suggested scratching the bald spot under his hat.

"Or something spooked him past the point of reason, and he ran," Beric intoned.

A shiver ran down Sandor's spine as he broke out in a cold sweat all over his body. *The kid is in real trouble.*

#

There is no way he can run faster than the bike, Sandor assured himself as he rode hell for rubber up the Demon Way praying to gods he didn't believe in that he would make the Stark property line before Gregor caught up with him. Sandor was sure his wish had been granted just as he felt a vice clamp down on his shoulder and he was yanked bodily off his bike. There was a giddy moment of free fall before the paralyzing pain of his breath being driven from his body eclipsed his being.

Eyes stuck open from the pain, the sight of Gregor leaning over him, his face a rictus of anger would be seared into Sandor's psyche as nightmare fuel for the rest of his life. "Not so fast, shaggy dog," his brother growled as Sandor's scalp caught fire from his brother's iron fingers tangling in his hair. Gregor drug him the 15 or so feet back to his Charger by his hair. At first, Sandor was too stunned by the pain to do anything, but his limp reflection in the cherry side panel catalyzed an escape attempt. Sandor pinched and dug at his brother's fist in his hair. He flailed and bayed for help. At one point, his foot connected with the side view mirror. The satisfaction bestowed by the crunching glass was quickly wrenched away as his brother gave a vicious twist to his neck by twisting his hair. Sandor went limp after that as numbness swirled down his left side. He was sure his bother had torn something in his neck, and he'd never walk again.

Long moments later, Sandor took it as a good sign that he could feel every jar and thump as Gregor folded him into the trunk. Darkness closed in with the trunk lid and night fell in Sandor's mind.

So began two days of torture that nothing could make Sandor's mind willingly revisit. The light at the end of that at tunnel had been Robb wrestling Sansa away from kicking Gregor as her father was simultaneously cuffing the mountain of a young man and admonishing his daughter that Starks did not harm prisoners. "Maybe it's time for me to get a different name then. If that asshole hadn't poisoned Lady I would have her tear," she spat in Gregor's face "limb from limb."

Notes for the Chapter:

With regards to Lysa, there is no equivalent to her in Stranger Things in her capacity in this chapter which is being the eyes that show us "Papa" is listening to the phone calls of Wintertown.

7. Dreams of Summer

Notes for the Chapter:

Are you guys as excited about the new season of Stranger Things as I am?! A re-watch and of the show and re-reading my notes on this story got me all inspired again. I went through the story so far and did a little editing, but nothing that would change the shape of the story. Biggest thing was probably editing the summary so that it actually goes with the story I am writing instead of the one I thought I thought I was writing when i first started this fic many moons ago.

Dreams of Summer

Sansa rung off with Joff's dippy, new teenage bride, when she heard the Sheriff's Bronco in her drive way. The woman had been singularly unhelpful thought Sansa thought there was a good chance that Joff might get the message. She didn't really care one way or another because she knew that Joff did not care enough about Bran to give him a ride down the street, much less go to the trouble of kidnapping him.

Sansa opened her front door in time to see Clegan coming around the khaki vehicle holding Bran's bike forlornly in front of him almost like a shield. "We found it on the Demon Road, where his friends thought it might be." His voice was the sorrowful drag of flint against steel. A spark of understanding raced through Sansa. He knows that there is something wrong now and he's getting ready to fight. For a moment Sansa heart ached to hold him, but then he continued to speak. "We'd like to search your house."

It was then that Sansa registered Deputies Dondarrion and Myr were getting out of another police vehicle. That was also the time when she became aware of Jon coming up from behind her to take the bike from Sandor. Ghost was with him and the albino husky with his discomfiting pink eyes sniffed madly at the bike. He raised his muzzle to the laden sky and bayed mournfully. Sansa hoped for a moment that the dog would put his nose to the ground and start tracking, but

he just continued his song.

"I've searched my own house. He's not here." The icy tone of her own voice made her want to shiver.

"Well, there might be signs of where he is," Clegane rasped flatly.

"Don't you think I've looked?" *How stupid and uncaring do you think I am? How bad of a mother?*

"We are trained investigators, Sansa," Clegane growled, though not ungently. Sansa eyed the men as they fanned out to search different areas of her tiny house. Dondarrion was an older man who'd been the last rookie her father hired shortly before the car accident that claimed her parents' life. Though only her father's body had been recovered from the icy water at the foot of the quarry, Sansa lost her mother that night too, even if her body had never been recovered. There had been whispers that her father had been decapitated by the shattered windshield. All Sansa had been told directly was that his body was not fit for an open casket, but that Dondarrion had identified Ned's body on the scene so there was no need for her to worry her head over it. Dondarrion gave her the same sad look today, as he had the day that he'd stood in the entrance of her sprawling manor hat in hand notifying her parents' death. His deep Summer Islander skin made it hard to tell that he was at least 10 years older than Sheriff Clegane, but Sansa knew he had to be. Maybe if she'd ever saw him smile there would be telling creases at his eyes. Or not considering all he'd seen in his line of work. Thoros, on the other hand, had been a Freshman the year Sansa graduated from highschool. He had been hired by Sandor shortly after he took over as Sheriff when Rory Cassel, a long time member of the department and her father's replacement, was killed in a routine traffic stop gone horribly wrong. Myr didn't go to Sept or pray to the Old Gods, but instead worshipped the fiery Lord of Light. Neither man really struck her as stellar investigators, but she was her father's daughter, and she would respect the Law even when it felt invasive and abrasive.

Ned Stark probably didn't look like much of an investigation whiz either, Sansa reflected as she watched these strange men move around her house. But Sansa knew her father's love of order and dogged desire to see justice meted out always seemed to lead him the

truth. It was not always a quick journey, but he got there in the end. Sansa remembered many a cancelled plan and late nights when Ned would take his gun out to the courtyard and clean it beneath the weirwood tree that spread its leave protectively over her childhood home.

Sansa let her eyes wander to man who didn't feel like a stranger in her home. She couldn't help but measure Sandor's slovenly uniform and slightly unsteady gait and found him sorely lacking in comparison the memory of her father's always pressed best and upright carriage. *Daddy didn't do it alone*, she reminded herself as she recalled that she'd heard that Brienne had left Sandor shortly after their daughter had passed away. Remembering that Sandor had lived the nightmare she herself could not bare to contemplate rekindled her compassion. *We are all doing the best we can*.

As if he could feel her eyes on him, he looked up and caught her staring. Their eyes held for an uncomfortable moment, and his mouth began to twitch in that familiar way that Sansa knew meant he was repressing a strong emotion. It was hard to watch, but she knew he would hate it if she looked away. Finally, he spoke, his voice huskier than before. "Do you keep a gun in the house?" The words were not what she expected, but then again, she did not know him anymore.

"No, but I have one in the shed, for scaring skunks mostly." By the time Sansa got all the words out she was speaking to Sandor's broad back. He was already moving toward the back door.

...

It felt unbelievably good to get out of Sansa's squalid little house. It was definitely a step up from the shit-hole trailer he lived in, but that was a step up for him. This house was a mighty come down for the great Sansa Stark, former cheerleader, and the darling only daughter of the mighty line of Starks. The absence of seething resentment over the way Sansa's life had turned out that seemed to claw out from the walls of her house gave him a head rush. It physically caused him pain so see such a once fine creature reduced to living so low, though the personal touches like embroidered pillows and bright curtains made it homey. He'd always liked her best running wild in the woods, leaves and twigs caught in her unruly hair, but he knew she'd been born to preside over tea parties and lord it over the lesser

women in the PTA, not work 12 hour shifts at the drug store.

Ironically, this shoddy little shack that he strode toward was still on the land she'd grown up on. In fact, it was not far from some ruins that he and Sansa had hung out in as kids. In the ultimate dick move, Joff, after a few years of marriage, parceled out the considerable acres of Stark land and built cheap houses on it to set himself up as a kind of back woods slum lord. There was nothing Sansa could do about it at the time, because a woman's assets became her husband's once they married. Sandor didn't know for sure, but he wouldn't put it past Joff to be charging Sansa rent for living on land that had been in her family longer than anyone could remember. Sandor privately suspected that Joff had something on Sansa, or the slimy little cunt would be paying through the nose in alimony like Sandor had been until Brienne had given up all pretense and married Coach Lannister.

Sandor was nudged out of his reverie by the big white dog that came loping around the house. The Starks had owned Huskies for a long time. Sandor had known one called Lady once, and for a moment it was the Summer of '69 as a warm slippery dog tongue lathed his fingers. "What happened to Bran?" Sandor asked as he scratched behind this white dog's ears just like another gray eared dog had loved. He hadn't expected a response, but the dog whined and raced across the yard to the dusty old shed.

Following the dog more slowly, Sandor had time to consider the outbuilding as he approached. It was older than the house, but of better construction. He wondered if Sansa had chosen this house because of the old Stark constructed building or if it had just been dumb luck. There was an iron horseshoe above the door, but instead in of the opening being up for luck, it was upside down. The legs curled up as if somehow withered or cringing away from something horrid.

Sandor gave the knob a turn. All the hairs on the back of his neck stood up as the darkness yawned and the hinges shrieked. It was as if the shed was trying to speak of the unspeakable. Sandor fell into a defensive crouch his hand instinctively going for his gun. A supportive growl rippled up over his shoulder from about 3 ft behind him and Sandor was reminded that this was no time for a side trip to Nathe. *I swear we'll drink about this later*, he promised his nightmares,

right now we have to find Sansa's kid. Oddly that seemed to quell the clamoring inside him.

Taking a cautious step inside, Sandor flicked on the light. He couldn't consciously recall having been in this building, but the Summers he'd been friends with Sansa had been long and filled with adventure and sometimes stolen booze and even a joint now and then, if Theon got too high or Rob wasn't around. Everything inside was coated in dust except for a box of shells. Sandor picked it up; only a couple of shells rang off each other. Sandor's eyes shot to an empty old gun rack mounted to the wall. He stepped forward to touch it and the overhead light buzzed off. Sandor's hackles rose even further as he put out his hand to find a dusty flash light. Clicking it on, Sandor ran the light over the shed now transformed to crisp shadows and dusty junk. There was place unmarred by dirt, much as the box of shells had been. Splintered wood stood stark. Sandor crouched to see if he could get a better look, figure out what had happened here.

The door banged open and the naked bulb buzzed suddenly to light. "Sheriff there you are!" Thoros all but hollered as he blundered in.

Sandor turned and aimed the flashlight directly into his deputy's eyes. "Stranger's Balls," he swore trying to swallow his heart down where it had jumped into his throat. He was not entirely sure if he'd been holding his gun he wouldn't have shot the man.

"What are you deaf?" Thoros said blithely, no idea how close a brush he'd just had with death. "I been calling you?" Sandor put on his surliest mien to deflect attention from what had just happened.

Nonplused, Thoros continued to press. "What's going on?"

Sandor brushed passed him determined to use the adrenalin spike to its fullest. "Call Nan. Have her activate the phone tree. Get a search party together. Get 'em out into these woods." Sandor said as he burst out into the sunlight.

"You think we got a problem here?" Thoros asked.

Sandor knew it in his bones. Instead of saying that though he said, "Make sure they search in groups. Nobody is to be out there alone.

Make sure everyone has a flashlight.”

...

“I’m sorry Nan, but we can’t possibly go out tonight.” Gendry’s head snapped up and he focused pleading eyes on his mother. She turned from him and faced the phone’s base where it was mounted to the wall lowering her voice. “Our children are beside themselves.” There was a pause. “It’s really a two person-“ Mom’s speech was cut off and Gendry thought he could hear squawking from the phone. He could not imagine the person that would interrupt his mother. “Oh alright!” she snapped. “One of us will be there. Give me the details so that Dany can continue calling.”

“I’ll go. We should be out there looking for Bran,” Gendry volunteered before his mother could even get the receiver in the cradle.

“No. It’s raining, and it too dangerous.”

“You said someone would come, and I bet Dad doesn’t want to,” Gendry said, throwing a hesitant glance at his father who was cutting steak into tiny pieces for his baby sister Holly.

“He’d win the money on that bet,” Bronn called out.

“Your father is a man grown and strong,” his mother informed him sternly while still managing to throw his father a look that made him want to gag. Bronn caught the look and straightened up, giving his wife an appraising leer. “You can go and return to a hero’s welcome or stay and call all the ladies on the phone tree while I go out in to the wet.”

His father tilted the last of his beer down his throat and pushed himself to his feet. “Well when you put it like that, how can I refuse?”

His mother pasted on a too bright smile and offered his father her cheek for a kiss. He tilted her chin up and mashed his face down on hers until she pushed him away. “Not in front of the children,” she said tightly, before he swatted her on the butt. A little cry emitted from her clamped lips that made Gendry bristle, but his mother laid a soothing hand on his shoulder. He turned to her, eyes now pleading

for a whole new set of reasons. “Mom, I can go. I want to.”

“I know Rose Bud,” Gendry’s ears flamed at her pet name for him. He lived in fear that one of his friends, or even worse, one of the assholes from school would hear it, though his mother was very careful to only use the shortened version of Bud in public. “But if Bran was targeted you fit the profile, as well.” Gendry cursed the amount of Unsolved Mysteries his mother watched and how logical her brain was. “So you will be staying here. If you want to be of use, go make sure Holly doesn’t choke on her food, while Dany helps me with this phone tree.” Mom’s voice raised on the last bit to carry out to his sister who had taken over Holly’s feeding when dad left.

“But-“ Gendry protested, stubbornly.

“Go.” His mother said in her “final word” voice.

Gendry and Dany locked eyes as they passed. She would cover for him.

Gendry sat down to eat his dinner, while keeping an eye on one sister as she painstakingly pinched each piece of meat or carrot into her mouth and chewed happily and his ears on the other as she and his mother took turns eating while the other called names on a phone tree.

Technically Dany wasn’t really his sister because Dad had brought her home from the war refusing to speak of where she came from. Gendry had heard his parents fighting about it on more than one occasion. His dad would say, “If it’s a good enough excuse for the fuckin heroes in the songs you love so much then it’s good enough for the man who gave you the protection his name especially since the bun you served me was a little underdone.” Gendry knew he was the bun, but he wasn’t sure what “underdone” meant.

Everyone knew Dany wasn’t his father’s baby because she was like 4 when Dad brought her home from the war. But Gendry didn’t know that until he heard some asshole at school teasing her about being a bastard. Gendry, a first grader, had walked right up to the boy and punched him in the nads. Everyone’s parents were called. Bronn had threatened to put his foot up Mr. Frey’s ass if he didn’t teach Little

Walder some manners. Mr. Frey insisted that his son would not be punished for telling the truth. It took both his mother and the principal to hold Bronn off while Mr. Frey and little Walder beat a hasty retreat.

When the Wheelers got home that night a family meeting was held. The topic of discussion was Dany's origin story. According to Mom and Dad, she was an orphan from across the Narrow Sea, but now and forever more she was a part of this family. Looking back, it really should not have surprised Gendry that violet eyed, silver haired Dany was not the true daughter of Gendry's brown eyed brown haired parents. Sometimes that made Gendry question his own blue eyes, but mostly he tried not to think about that. Also, thought his mother and sister were both very pretty they were not the same kind of pretty. Gendry couldn't explain it very well, but he'd once overheard Great-Gran Olenna say, "Marge and all my other roses are beautiful blooms, queens of any garden, but our little Dany is an exotic hot house flower from a green house, like an orchid. That can only be achieved with very careful pruning of the bloodline." Whatever kind of flower his sister was, Gendry maintained that he would stand up for her and beat the snot out of anyone who made her cry. This statement made his mother very cross, which made Gendry sad, but a brother has to do what a brother has to do. Plus, he could tell that Dad was proud of him and that didn't happen a whole lot as Gendry preferred reading to any sort of sports. Dany had come to his room later that night and interrupted this activity. She offered him a deal. She would tell him everything she remembered about her childhood before meeting Bronn if Gendry promised only to fight people with her permission. Gendry was hesitant to make this deal because how was he to know if there was a good story in it for him. Dany agreed to tell him the tale and let him decide, on his honor, if it warranted the sacrifice of his violence on her behalf. She was always talking like that. Dany read a lot too, and unlike him, her parents praised her for it. Gendry didn't mind, because it made her really good at telling stories. He loved it when she used her "princess voice." Gendry was quick to swear the oath so that he could hear the story.

It turned out that Dany remembered quite a bit about her former life. There had been a grand mansion with high walls and a red door. She'd had another brother with white hair like hers. There had been

a knight who'd taken care of her and that brother in the house with the red door, though now to her great sorrow she could no longer remember his name.

One night, men broken down the red door. There were gun shots and blood. Her white-haired brother told her to run, while he tried to hold off the bad men.

The knight escaped with Dany, but not her brother. The knight had been shot. He passed out and the car they were in went into a ditch. Her knight died there in that ditch. Dany was too afraid to leave him. She got very hungry. She cried because her belly hurt.

Soldiers came. Bronn was one of them. There was an argument, then a fight. Bronn stabbed one of the men who was dressed like him, and the rest backed off. He gave her food. Her memories were hazy after that, until the day that she met her mother. She got off a plane with Bronn who she had been told to call Dad. A pretty woman with a darling baby were waiting at the airport. The woman was mad when she saw Dany. Dany began to cry because she had always wanted a Mommy, but not a mad one. The woman handed her baby to Bronn and knelt down in front of her.

"Well aren't you the prettiest thing," the woman said. "Like a little dandy lion with violet eyes. Would you like to be called Dandy or Violet?" Dany had tried to say Dandy, because it sort of sounded like her other name, but could only manage Dany. "Well Dany it is then," the woman said. "And you can call me Mommy." And so she did from that day on. "Let me introduce you to your little brother Gendry," Mommy went on as she yanked on Bronn's coat to get him to kneel. Dany tried to say Gendry's name but it came out Genny. Bronn was not happy about that. She could tell by the way his eyebrows met in the middle. "Can you say Bud?" Mommy asked. That Dany could do.

And so Gendry was mostly called Bud until Dany could master her lisp. Though she remained Dany, Mom called her Dandy Lion as often as she called Gendry Rose Bud. They were careful secret names from Mom's garden that were not spoken of outside the house.

"And now we have a secret," Dany said seriously. "Do you see why you can't fight for me all the time."

Gendry had been little and dazed with all the information his glorious sister had just imparted upon him. “No,” he replied stubbornly.

“Because my other brother died probably or got lost because he was protecting me. I don’t want that to happen to you because I love you,” she explained her own temper fraying. Dany could through a fit like no other.

“I love you too,” he said, throwing his arms around her and squeezing with all his six-year-old might.

“You are so strong,” Dany said through a smile. “I’ll let you know if need your help. Shit stains” Gendry giggled as his father’s grown-up phrase came out in his sister’s princess voice “like Walder Frey don’t mean anything to me. I know where I come from, and I know who my family is.”

“But he made you cry,” Gendry protested.

“I have feelings, but feelings pass. If you get hurt, it that could be permanent. Do you understand now?”

“Yes,” Gendry said sullenly.

“Will you abide by my wishes in this regard?” she asked him seriously in her princess voice.

“Yes,” Gendry replied only slightly grudgingly. He liked it when Dany used her princess voice. It made him feel like a knight. Only the knight in Dany’s story had died. That scared Gendry and made him sad. Sad for his sister and her other brother who was probably dead too.

Gendry remembered this code of protection and silence as he turned in the seat of his bike to watch Daario Harrington, a douche bag so known for being a gigilo, that even middler schoolers talked about, climb the drainpipe to his sister’s room. He probably would not have ratted out his sister even if he didn’t have a best friend to search for but he would still worry about her.

...

Sam was very careful not to outpace his flashlight beam. The forest was dark and spooky. He would not have been out in for anything less than one of his students no matter how sweet Mrs. Wheeler was over the phone. For Bran though, he'd brave the cold, foggy Wolfs Wood to look for the sad quiet boy who was so smart he could afford to draw during lectures.

A lumbering form ahead gave him quite a turn. For a moment he could have sworn it was a white walker. Thought he was a science teacher, Sam read history texts to help him get to sleep and lately he'd been having nightmares about the events leading up to the Longest Night.

Sam jerked his flashlight beam up to find it was just Sheriff Clegane. Sam quickened his pace. He'd read somewhere that missing persons were found more often when law enforcement took a personal interest. "He's a great student," Sam blurted.

"What?" the big man rasped as he turned quickly to shine his light right in Sam's eyes.

Sam gave a little yelp and stood dazed. The scars across the Sheriff's face were gruesome. There was a time in Sam's life when he probably would have been afraid of the man, but now Sam just felt a swelling of compassion. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to startle you. I'm Samwell Tarly. Bran's Science teacher. I just wanted you to know he's a great student. Straight A's."

The man grunted and lurched back into motion saying, "I never cared much for Science."

Sam scurried to keep up with him. "Maybe you had a bad teacher."

"Mrs. Fossoway certainly did not like my attitude," Clegane agreed.

The name called to mind a hunched Crone of a woman who did frighten Sam. "She's still kicking around, believe it or not."

"There were rumors she is actually a bog mummy." Sandor grated. Sam yipped a little laugh. "Rumors that I may have started when she came to class one morning with toilet paper stuck to her shoe." They

both laughed at that. Sam felt like a traitor for making merry at another teacher's expense, but Mrs. Fossoway was so harsh that she just as often discouraged learning rather than encouraging the all important curiosity journeys. "Hell, I guess she had good reason not to like me," the Sheriff admitted. They continued walking through the darkness in a semi-companionable silence punctured by other searchers calling Bran's name for a while until Clegane's gravelly voice harmonized with the gravel grinding under their feet. "My daughter loved Science. The stars, the solar system, everything in the sky fascinated her. She lit up like a tiny sun when she talked about it."

Sam turned to look at the Sheriff as he spoke. The scarred man lit up when he spoke of his daughter. "What's her name, maybe I'll have her," Sam spoke as a collector hoping to acquire a fine piece of art for truly filling an open mind and then teaching that mind to fill itself was truly his art.

The other man grunted as if he'd been kicked in an old wound. "You won't have her." And he rumbled something about her mother living out of state before moving off at such a brisk pace that Sam with his bulk and shorter legs could not hope to match. The light in the Sheriff had been dowsed as if by a bucket of water. Sam had certainly put his foot in his mouth thought he did not know how.

"She's dead," a sweet voice murmured from a stand of pines.

"What?" Sam said jerking around, expecting to find a specter of some kind.

A lovely round face took shape out of the fog. "His daughter, she's dead," this pronouncement was no less eerie for all it was more emphatic though no less soft as if taking great care not to let her words reach Sheriff Clegane.

Though afraid of what he might find, or rather not find, Sam turned his light in her direction. A dark coat wrapped a lovely plump figure from head to foot. Glorious dark hair, or at least it looked dark out in the forrest at night, for all he knew it could be a lovely golden brown in the sun, tumbled over the collar of her coat and fell around her chest. Sam realized that he had been staring too long, a conviction

confirmed by her blush as he managed to pull his eyes back up to her face. He wanted to say something, but nothing would come out of stupid fat mouth. He tried again, but all that would come was, "I don't think I know you."

When she smiled her cheeks dimpled. "You do, you just don't recognize me," she said shyly.

"I think I'd remember seeing someone as lovely as you," he stammered. *Where had that come from?* He never said things like that to women.

Her dimples deepened as she walked further into the woods. "Look for me at lunch," he thought he heard her say over her shoulder.

"I will," he promised, as he hurried to catch up with her. Mrs. Wheeler had said not one was supposed to search alone. They searched mostly in silence for the next couple of hours until news of the tragedy spread.

Notes for the Chapter:

I know the Wheeler family as a whole is my biggest reach. They are just a kind a hodge podge of GoT charries that are fun to write and fit with other characters in the story. Hope this back story helps the peices fit together. As always, I'd love to hear what you all think.

8. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.

Summary for the Chapter:

First order of business is to establish how our Dany is different than Nancy. I actually feel like this makes some of the actions "Nancy" takes make more sense further on. Daario is also going to be quite different from Steve. One way that our Dany is like Nancy is that she is very smart and concerned with school. That is not a trait I would typically ascribe to Dany, but it works here.

Second, we see the lengths to which Dany will go when confronted with her worst fear. :(

Next, we establish a mood at the Stark house.

Last, we get the party together

Dany

Dany was so focused on the color coded index cards in her hands that the tippity-tap on her window made her jump and scatter the cards everywhere. For a moment, Dany was four and death was about to pour in through her window to kill her family and sweep her off to a different life. Dany crouched crouched by her chair prepared to kick and scream and bite.

A cheerful wave and a gleaming smile shattered her flashback. Dany took a deep breath and focused on the things around her that were real. She drew the smell of Giorgio, never the designer imposter, anchoring her to this space of huge floral print comforter and matching pillow shams. She could hear thunder rumbling a warning of current danger. She could taste the fading grape of the Bubblicious she'd almost swallowed a moment ago when...

Oh shit Daario, the hottest guy at school, is knocking on my window. A momentary flash of Bronn, she always thought of him as Bronn in her head even though she'd been calling him Daddy for a decade, yanking Daario off the roof and caving in his skull with a dirty work boot, spurred her across the room. She cringed as the casing squealed from disuse as she pushed it open. "What are you doing here. I told

you on the phone that I am under house arrest now.”

“And the thought of my fair maiden caught up in a tower studying all alone with no one to appreciate her beauty,” Daario stated slid gracefully through her window and popped up with his hand dramatically on his chest, “broke my heart. So I braved the dragon in her layer, to help her study.” The last was delivered with a mocking laugh.

Dany blushed. Freshman year she'd given such an impassioned history report about an Ancient Queen who'd been driven mad by betrayal that everyone had started calling her Mother of Dragons. As a skinny, dorky, braced and bespectacled late bloomer of obvious Valyrian descent who was legitimately obsessed with old Volantis and all that sprang from it, Dany had beamed proudly at the moniker. She had graciously accepted all the stuffed dragon gag gifts with the naivete that only a beautifully spoiled child could muster. That illusion was shattered Sophomore year when she destroyed the curve in a math class that was advanced for her age, but probably below grade level for the varsity football players in her class. A few of them were later kicked off the team for gpa related reasons and the Hawkins Tigers didn't even get within sight of State that year. With nothing better to do late one night, the team got liquored up and egged her house and burned “motherfucker of dragons” into her mother's prized lawn, trampling her precious rose bushes in the act. Bronn shot the tires out on the mint '53 F100 before they could get away, while little Gendry put the fire out with the garden hose. Bronn proceeded to walk over to the truck, yanked one of the football players out and beat him unconscious all the while hollering threats about what would happen to anyone who so much as looked at Dany crosswise or touched his wife's garden in the future. Dany privately thought that was the night that Holly was conceived. *Ick!* The team came over the next day and cleaned up the egg mess, while Bronn taught Gendry how to lay sod and mother taught her to bind up rose bushes, or in extreme cases prune back to before the damage. No one at school bothered her after that. Dany put away all the stuffed Dragons but the three she liked best which even now guarded her bed. They just so happened to be black, green, and white and so had predictable names.

Daario, with his flamboyant flock of seagulls hair, dyed a black so rich and deep sometimes it gleamed blue or even purple, had eyes to match. He had a personality to match too, so kneeling expectantly blended seamlessly into his swashbuckling, cavalier attitude. He managed to mix that with cocksure, star of the basketball team vibe so that no one doubted his coolness. He was so cool, in fact, that Dany knew that if she was by his side she'd be Queen of the School. And Dany did, so desperately, want to be Queen.

And she liked Daario. His dramatic flare appealed to her on so many levels. The comment about a princess in tower set her heart racing, even as the memory of his kisses made her insides clench. Daario was such a good kisser. And the rumor mill said he was good at everything else too. After all practice made perfect and he'd certainly had a lot of practice if the rumor mill was even half right. Dany had no experience beyond kissing, but she wanted some. She just wasn't sure if she could handle being one among many of Daario's conquests, not matter how hot he was.

"I know you have probably heard the expression, 'my dad will kill you if he finds you in here,' but mine really will, so you need to go," Dany said urgently, if a little disappointedly.

"I saw his truck parked on the outskirts of town with the other volunteers, on my way in." Daario's family lived on a big estate east of town beyond the quarry. "He'll be out all night beating the bushes for that lost kid."

Dany was happily surprised to hear that Bronn had actually made it out there. She'd have thought he'd go down to the bar and have a few drinks, but he was probably afraid that word would get back to her mother if he didn't report for duty. Still, she doubted he'd be out as late as Daario hoped. "Where did you park your car?"

"Ah such a clever girl," he declared, coming smoothly to his feet. "One of the many reasons I adore you. I parked the next street over."

The compliment and Daario's cunning strummed her heart strings even as she picked up on the unspoken subtext of 'this is not my first rodeo.' "Ok, you can stay--" He lunged in for a kiss, but she put her hand on his chest to stop him "—to help me study."

He put on an exaggerated frown that managed to be sexy and funny at the time. Then he bent to collect her cards where they lay scattered on the floor. "Let's get comfortable," he said as he straightened. Before Dany could answer, he vaulted over the swirling white enameled foot of her bed. He managed to do it so lightly that she doubted her sharp eared mother heard, though her dragons did jump as his weight displaced them from their pillowy perch.

"All right, but no funny business," Dany said as she sat primly on her coral and green comforter as far away from Daario as she could get. Not because she was repulsed, but because she was so attracted she hoped distance would lend some clarity. Even at that distance she could not quite get out of the cloud of his Drakkar cologne. She took a moment to weave the dragons into the swirls of her headboard, where they typically nested when she slept. That task settled her mind so she was ready when Daario began reading questions off her index cards.

During the next 15 minutes, it became clear that Daario couldn't really follow what he was reading, for though he was a senior, she was taking Mr. Tarly's Advanced Bio class. No shame in that. He spent most of free time bouncing a ball. That was his ticket out, he'd told her. Dany remembered how firm his chest was a moment ago. She could swear that she'd felt the cleft between one peck and another...

"Earth to Dany..." She started, realizing that she hadn't heard the last question. His smirk told her he had a pretty good idea the direction her thoughts had taken. "Glad I'm not the only one who is bored. I've got an idea to spice things up a bit."

"Daario," Dany said, a low warning in her voice.

"No, just hear me out. You get an answer right, I take off an article of clothing. You get one wrong, you take something off. You've got the advantage, but it will get harder as you go along."

Dany wasn't quite sure that he'd meant the innuendo, but she blushed hotly anyway. "No. I need to study," she said firmly even as she filed the idea for his little game under f for fantasy and maybe m for something else...

She shook her head again. School was her ticket out. Though she did want to be Queen of Highschool, that was not the end of her ambition. Dany wanted to be a Journalist like Barbara Walters. She wanted to be respected for intelligent insightful work as well as being recognized worldwide. She wanted to give the unheard a voice, while bringing new and exciting people into the living rooms of a Nation. Dany could not say how or why, but she felt destined to do this. And she wouldn't be sidetracked by a pretty face stretched over too much charm. She wouldn't even get out of Hawkins if she did that. "No," she stated emphatically.

Daario pouted, but moved onto the next question. Dany couldn't take her eyes off that luscious lip. It got bigger and bigger in her mind until it smacked her full on the mouth. It was then that she realized that Daario had come all the way across her bed while she'd been mesmerized by his mouth. The feel of it sliding against hers was so delicious that she forgot why they hadn't been kissing this whole time. Her breasts grew heavy with want even as the tips hardened. She pressed their ache wantonly into his firm chest. As if he could feel how badly they wanted to be free Daario began undoing the buttons on her shirt. He cursed quietly into her mouth, when he got to the sweater vest that she wore to try to distract from her clamorously blooming body.

Dany froze wondering if her mom had heard, thus interrupting the lust loop she fallen into. "Daario," she said urgently, shocked that it sounded more like a plea than a deterrent. She'd have to find better words, but now he was kissing the skin he'd exposed while undoing buttons. Dany arched her back helplessly. No wonder all those other girls gave into him...

That sobering thought brought her up short. "Stop," she whispered.

"Why, when this feels so good?" he said though he put his hands on either side of her to lift his weight off of her.

Dany squirmed out from under him and pressed her back into the pillows. "Because my mom is here!" Dany tried to put maximum feeling into minimum voice.

Daario made sitting up and looking theatrically over his into one

fluid movement. "Funny I don't see her. You don't think she likes to watch?"

"Are you crazy?" Dany was scandalized by the mom part of that statement, but she didn't hate the idea of an audience...

"For you? Yes! Let me show just how crazy I am." He had not trouble being quietly enthusiastic as he whispered into her ear.

He has so much practice at this! "Was this your plan all along? To get into my room and get...another notch?" She said as she furiously redid buttons.

"No," he stated simply.

"I'm not like guard house Ami or —"

"You mean you're not a slut?"

"I would not use that word," Dany said with a frown, not like that it seemed like he could read her mind.

"You are so cute when you lie." The mocking laughter was back in his voice and it both titillated and irritated Dany.

"Shut up," she commanded through a smile.

Daario plucked the black dragon from his perch and rumbled in a low Dothraki accent as if he were speaking for the stuffy. "Bad Daario. Don't call Mother on her lies."

Shame and anger flashed in Dany's eyes as she snatched Drogo from Daario's hand. "You are an ass Daario Naharis."

"And you are magnificent Dany Wheeler." She allowed him to capture the hand that was not holding Drogo to her aching heart. "Especially when rage burns in your eyes." He kissed her knuckles. "I remember your baleful glare the next morning from beside your mother in the rose garden. I swore off football that day knowing you would never give yourself to one that threw a ball, even as I vowed that one day I would bank that angry fire and kindle passion in it's place. Yes, I've been with dozens of other girls, but never once with a

dragon.”

Dany had started trying to reclaim her hand somewhere around “dozens,” but she twisted it away with vigor at dragon. “So you came into my house to mock me?” Her temper was at full boil now and she almost didn’t care if her mother did hear her. Perhaps Daario would have more rugged looks with Bronn’s boot print across his face.

“No. I came here to spend time with you. I don’t care what we do. Biology, Chemistry, reading off cards or practical application. I use the name others have used to hurt you, not to hurt you, but because it is the truth. You know this. That’s why it hurts so much. But it is still you.” He glanced up at her through his lashes and for a moment his eyes looked purple instead of blue.

Something shifted in Dany then. She nodded in acknowledgment. She’d previously thought Daario was just a himbo with a flare for the dramatic that kept his loyal cadre of followers hanging on his next move. Just now she was so overwhelmed by the realization that his melodrama was a mask to hide his depths. Her heart soared and her panties soaked. Dany didn’t trust herself with words. She wanted to plumb those depths. But not tonight, in some rushed panic.

Daario saw her a nod and raised her a smirk before he began reading off the index cards that were somehow in his hands again.

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Ice...Cream is the best thing I have ever put in my mouth. Cold, sweet, with fruit chunks in some bites.

“Looks good on you.” I look up at the hairy man, who has stopped running water over dishes for no reason that I can understand. I am irritated that he has broken my focus on the taste explosions in my mouth. “The smile. It looks good on you.” I don’t know what he’s talking about. He bares his teeth at me, but not in a way that makes me frightened or more angry. I feel my own lips lifting in response and I don’t know why. There was one nurse in the smooth place who used to do that too and it made me feel...warm and soft inside. Is it the memory of that feeling that lifted my lips just now? I am trying to

put words together to ask the man when a knock at the door makes me jump.

“No worries little one. I’ll go scare off anyone who is trying to come in,” he says while drying off his hands. Then he contorts his face, makes his eyes turn in and cheeks puff out all while emitting a growl. I emit an involuntary noise too. It’s like a bumpy squeak. It carries memories of another girl with long dark hair. The hairy man cannot hold his scary face and he makes a sound too, but his is more like a bleating. It trails out over his shoulder as he heads for the door.

I turn to look over my shoulder through the opening in the wall that talked through earlier when he made all the other people leave. He speaks with a woman who has long, shining, dark red hair. Even from this distance I can feel the tug of something familiar. The feeling is sweetly painful and terrifying at the same time. I am about to call out when the woman pulls out a long black metal L. The L jerks and a giant bloody hole erupts in the back of the hairy man’s head.

They are here for me! I spring off the counter and run toward the door I snuck in earlier. There are two men there with L’s pointed at me. I hesitate until a voice that grips my being with anger and terror floats through the opening in the wall. “Lysa dear, was that really necessary?” Papa has come for me. I turn on the men and pop things inside their brains until they fall down. I run into the night.

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Sansa

Sansa was blown away by how good the photos were. Before he and his deputies left to manage the search Sandor told her to pick out the clearest, most recent photo she had of Bran for the missing poster. Jon brought out a box explaining that he thought he had good one, but it was mixed in with a bunch of others he’d taken.

Sansa had taken a photography class at the community college back when she still had dreams. Jon had been little then, but he’d been interested. Apparently, totally unbeknownst to her, he’d remained interested. “Jon these are amazing. I can’t believe that I didn’t know about this. I...I...” Her voice broke along with her heart. Sansa was swamped by a deep despair. Not only was she a shitty mom who let her kid go missing, but also a terrible sister who had no idea what

her brother's interests were.

"No Sissa. You do so much for us." Sansa could hear in his voice he was trying to be strong. She threw her arms around him. *When did he get so big?* she thought as Jon crumpled into her. He wasn't much taller than she was, but she'd been looking up at him for years. All that time he'd been a gawky kid, but he was a man grown now, with wide solid shoulders. And strong arms, she realized as he clung desperately to her. "The least I could do was keep an eye on him." Tears that she had not seen since he was little boy streamed out along with his confession.

His words wrenched Sansa's heart and her own tears began to run. She hugged Jon close like she had when their parents died, only now she could feel the scrape of stubble pressed into her shoulder. "Jon, it's not your fault." He sobbed. She took his shoulders in each hand and forced him to look at her. "Jon don't do this to yourself. I need you to understand that this is not your fault. I am the mom." The statement broke her. She could no longer see through her own grief and pain, but she could feel him nod. "Tell me you understand. I need to hear you say it."

"I...understand," he bit out between sobs.

"Good because he's not gone. I can feel him close to us. We're gonna find him. The lone wolf dies, but the pack survives. We're gonna find him. Tell me you understand."

"I understand." His voice sounded stronger that second time.

Sansa took strength from that and the flow of her grief ebbed. She dashed the tears from her eyes and they landed on a pic of Bran among the bridges and landscapes in Jon's scattered portfolio. Bran was smiling in the open carefree way unique to him. His auburn waves so much like Rob's tussled and framing cool gray eyes. "This is it. This is the one."

"I took it on the first day of school," Jon said.

Sansa's heart squeezed again and she squeezed Jon into a sideways hug. "You are such a good brother." She was so grateful for the

strange little family she had. It was pack, and pack survived.

The moment was shattered by the ringing telephone. *Maybe Sandor has found him*, Sansa thought as she sprang up to answer it. "Hello," she said too loudly shocked by how ragged her own voice sounded. No one answered but she could hear breathing on the other end of the line. "Clegane..." one breath two... "have you found Bran?" The breathing quickened and shallowed. "Joff if this is some sort of prank, I will..." Sansa became aware that Jon was holding her from behind. Unburdened by the need to stand up, she focused her entire being into the phone. "Bran!" she shrilled. She knew it was him. He was so tired and scared. Sansa tried to pour all her love and assurance down the connection. "Bran baby, we're coming for you. Do you hear me? Tell me you understand." There was shaky little moan from the phone. The breathing was replaced by a clickity growl and Sansa understood Bran's terror from a moment before. She used her fury at being separated from her boy to shove it away. "I'm coming for my son. Do you hear me? I'm coming and the pack follows with me. Leave our lands. Leave Bran where he will be safe or I will rip you from existence," Sansa raged into the phone. She felt as if she were not choosing her own words, but merely a conduit for ancient outrage.

Something of utter cold and darkness screamed back at her. There was sizzling pop as the phone's fragile wiring was over loaded, but not before a freeze so withering that it burned Sansa in her bones. She screamed as she sagged against Jon.

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Gendry

The rain was pissing down in sheets; the thunder nipping the heels of the lightening. Gendry's voice was cracked and hoarse from calling for Will, though he doubted his missing friend would be able to hear his own name over Lommy and Hotpie bickering.

"Maybe we should turn back," Hot Pie said for probably the 100th time.

"Seriously, if you wanna be a baby, then go home, already!" Lommy sniped back. He at least varied his responses with different insults.

“I’m just being realistic, Lommy.” Hot Pie countered.

“No. You’re just being a big sissy.” Lommy shot back.

Gendry tried to shut his friends out, slowly sweeping his beam across the dripping trunks. Once he thought he saw Bran's reddish hair and pain skin, but it turned out to just be a carved up old weirwood. Those things had always creeped him out, but this one seemed to be pointing into the darkness. Gendry had shifted his direction and brought them to dark, rainy, clearing.

“Did you ever think Bran went missing because he ran into something bad,” Hot Pie persisted. “And we’re going to the exact same spot and we have no weapons or anything?”

The question was clearly rhetorical, but Gendry could feel Lommy gearing up to reply. He couldn’t take it anymore. “You guys shut up! I think I hear something.”

The bickering petered off. All Gendry could hear was the rain and thunder, but it was nice change. Then there was a crunching rattle. They all swung their light in that direction. A weirwood tree loomed pale and creepy in their beams. Gendry heaved a sigh of relief that this one didn’t have a face. At least not on the side that was facing them.

Another crack and they all swung around. This time the beams caught yellow and tan instead of red and white. They all tensed as their beams caught a scared kid, dripping and shivering in way too little clothing for a night like this.

Notes for the Chapter:

I had more fun writing the Dany/Daario scene than I thought I would. I don't ship them long term in the books though I do cheer for them as a fling. I don't ship Nancy and Steve in the show either. So I thought their scene was just going to be filler for kinda short chapter. I almost didn't write it at all. Then it turned out to be the meat. There was all this fun back story that I never would have found if I

hadn't turned my mind to it. That is my absolute favorite thing about writing.

How did you all like the Lysa and Petyr reveal? They are such a dangerous team. Don't forget that toast that Petyr made at the high school when he was still the guidance counsellor. That's going to be important later.

I'm having fun blending pack magic into the science fiction of Stranger Things. It will not be the last belief system that will be woven in. One of the things I love most about GRRM's work is that he refuses to pick a side about whose belief system is at work in the world.

As always, I'm interested in hearing your thoughts and opinions. Also feel free to talk about anything GoT or Stranger Things. I never know where my next spark is going to come from.

Author's Note:

I know this is weird, but let me know what you think.